

# Get Your Life Back

Practicing Selective Smartphone Use  
as a Way to Reclaim Our Time & Attention





**TAME  
YOUR  
TECH**

Free Your Mind

Published May 2026.

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## Introduction

# Wired and Tired

We all feel it. We're compulsively plugged in to our online worlds in one form or another. It's how we work, make plans, check updates, and keep up with others. Still, as you've likely noticed, living this way is distracting, demanding, and never-ending.

Instead of carrying the world around on our shoulders, we're carrying it in our pockets and purses. And while we love the convenience of having it there at our fingertips, it's also SO compelling, we don't always know when or how to let our minds take a break!

It's like we have someone constantly tapping us on the shoulder, demanding our attention in ways we can't resist. And our attention is *such* a precious, limited commodity.

What happens if we keep living this way? What's being compromised here? Is it affecting our health? Our relationships? Our ability to focus? To be fully present?

Most of all, is it worth the toll it's taking on us to continue living this way?

For those who feel frazzled by the constant siren call of their devices, this book is a way to keep tech in check so it doesn't rob you of our right to think and act for yourself!

By following the clear, liberating steps in this booklet, you'll have the chance to ask what it is you REALLY want in exchange for this one life you're here to live.

## Making This Work for You



**TEAM UP.** In order to make this sustainable, your most crucial step is to recruit others to join you. Holding each other accountable and offering support sets you up for lasting results.



**TIMELINE.** Steps 4-7 are meant to be lifestyle habits you adopt as you go. You decide how long you'd like to spend on each of those steps before adding the next one.



**CUSTOMIZE.** Use the adaptations inserted within this booklet, or come up with your own adaptation that works best for you.

## More than Just Smartphones

The concepts in this book relate specifically to smartphone use. But it's not just our phones that have such a stranglehold on us. Gaming has also been proven to keep us from experiencing rich, fulfilling lives.

For those wanting to do a more comprehensive brain refresh involving all types of digital media, you can facilitate a multi-person reset using the resource found at <https://tame-your-tech.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Back-on-Track-Facilitator-Guide-3.pdf>. Members within the group will use this resource: <https://tame-your-tech.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Back-on-Track-Users-Guide-3.pdf>.

This research-based program is based on Dr. Victoria Dunckley's phenomenal work found in the book, *How to Reset Your Child's Brain*. Running this full reset will do wonders for regulating sleep cycles, reversing behavioral concerns, and repairing attention disorders.

# 7 Steps to Getting Your Life Back

## An Overview



1

### Get Help

Duration

Your chances of succeeding at this on your own, long-term, aren't great. If you're serious about this, find someone to do it with you. If that's not possible, recruit someone who will hold you accountable for each step. If no one is available, find help on our website.

< 1 hour

2

### Just Notice

Duration

Attach a mental cue to your phone. This can be a paper clip, rubber band, or sticker. Pay attention to why you're on your phone and how it makes you feel. Post the given questions as your screen saver. At the end of day one, write about what you're noticing.

48 Hours

3

### Ask Why?

Duration

Decide why you *really* want this. What's on the line if you don't make any changes? What hangs in the balance for you? Write out your answer in detail, share with your accountability partner, and post it. The stronger the WHY, the further you'll go.

About 20 Minutes

4

### Dumb it Down

Duration

Time to dumb down your phone so it loses some of its appeal. Add a new home screen reminder to make it clear this device DOES NOT own you! Get rid of all the apps that aren't serving you. If this is hard, stop and ask yourself why it's hard and what you want most.

Ongoing. The New Norm.

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5  
**Be Present**

Duration

The value of being fully present is huge! Sleep with your phone way out of reach. Stuff your phone into multiple pairs of socks to improve your ability to focus. And if you're a driver, commit to not using your phone while the vehicle is in motion. It sets a great example and could save your life.

Ongoing. The New Norm.

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6  
**Set the Stage**

Duration

The way you set up your home can help support your wish to live IRL. Post a sign in your front window to show you live in a screen less home. Put a box by the door to invite guests to give their phones a rest. And be clear about where and when screens are and are not welcome.

Ongoing. The New Norm.

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7  
**Learn & Grow**

Duration

Ready to really take off and live your best life? Invite a few people to join a Learn & Grow club where, together, you study, experiment, and dabble in all those things you've been wanting to try. As you exchange screen time for what means the most to you, you thrive!

Ongoing. The New Norm.

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4

# 1



## Support Systems

# Don't Try this Alone

You're not the only one who wants to exchange screen time for IRL time (living in real life). Other people want this too. And in order for this to work long-term, this is THE MOST ESSENTIAL of the six steps.

Sure, Tame Your Tech has online support set up where you can learn from and draw strength from our virtual crowd (<https://tame-your-tech.org/community/>), but NOTHING compares to having someone you know personally there in your corner, backing you up.

Ideally, this will work both ways. This other person will also be moving through this process with you so you're checking in with each other as you go. Truth is though, not all of us have an ideal set-up.

No worries. There are always ways to move forward when you really want something!

Why does it matter so much that we have accountability partners? Because on our own, we don't perform as well as we do in a group. That's been proven. It's a beautiful truth built within our human nature. We were never meant to go it alone.

In the classic children's book, *Mike Mulligan and the Steam Shovel*, the main character works harder and faster when people are watching. As you dig your way out of the pit of overly immersive tech, the same holds true for you.

As you team up with at least one other person, you've just doubled your benefits. Not only will you be able to improve the focus of your life, you'll build relationships in the meantime as well.

Stop and think. Who is it that can help you stick with your plan make this change happen?

<b>Your Situation</b>	<b>Suggestion</b>
I honestly can't think of anyone who would be willing to help me.	This doesn't have to stop you from moving forward. Go to our community page at <a href="https://tame-your-tech.org/community/">https://tame-your-tech.org/community/</a> and click on "Accountability Partners." There you can fill out a form requesting a partner who also wants to do this.
I can only think of one person, but they probably won't want to do this.	You may be right. But ask them for help anyway and maybe the changes you're choosing will have an impact on them for the better. If it's someone who can really commit to this and help you stay on course, that's a great first step!
I've got someone who wants to do this with me.	Awesome! Then both of you can sign the commitment form found below and get rolling. If either of you ever backs out, find someone else to step in so this can be an ongoing way of life for you.
I've got a few people who all want to do this with me.	Congrats! This is the ideal set-up. Keep your group strong with lots of encouragement and validation throughout this process. Your group may change over time. It might grow or get smaller. Don't let that kill your momentum!

# The Invitation



Here's one way you might recruit an accountability partner.

*I'm trying this program that helps me use my time better and be more present, but I need someone to hold me accountable for the steps I take along the way. That person offers feedback and encouragement so I can see it all the way through to the end. Would you be willing to help me out with this? It would take less than 15 minutes of your time with each of the 7 steps I take. We can communicate through text or quick call. **(If they say no, just say you understand and thank them for their time. If they agree to help you, tell them about the Accountability Partner agreement they'll need to sign.)***

*Do you have any interest in learning more about this and doing it with me? **(If they do, you can direct them to the [tame-your-tech.org/screen-detox/](https://tame-your-tech.org/screen-detox/) website. If not, that's perfectly fine.)***

Once you've found your accountability partner(s), introduce them to this 7 Step plan. They need to learn what it's all about so they can prepare for what's ahead.

# The Commitment



Each accountability partner will fill out the form below. If you're acting as an accountability partner within your group, fill one out. If you're not, just have the person who's helping you fill one out.

As you take each of these next steps, let your accountability person or team know how it's going. You can do this through a group text or call. Talk about what went well, what was hard, and what you learned.

This is such a crucial part of making lasting change! It's all about being there for each other--having high expectations for yourself and those you're doing this with. And not giving up just because someone else does. Not giving up just because it feels like the easy way out, because it's not.

Keep this going! Make it a new way of life. As long as we live in a world saturated with tech, we have to make sure it works FOR us, rather than derailing our lives.

# I Want You to Succeed

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to help \_\_\_\_\_ as their accountability partner to improve their chances of succeeding with their goal of improving the use of their time and focusing on things they really care about.

To that end, I'll do the best I can to respond in a timely manner when they reach out. I understand this should only take 15 minutes of my time with each of the 7 steps, although our interactions may be longer.

I know that my input makes a difference, so as they share with me **what went well, what was hard, and what they learned** during each step, **I'll listen carefully, ask relevant questions, and show genuine interest** in how things are going.

I know my role is *not* to coach or direct, only to validate and encourage.

Together, we've agreed to communicate via:

- Text messaging through (app) \_\_\_\_\_
- Video call using (app) \_\_\_\_\_
- Group call using (app) \_\_\_\_\_

Because I care about this person and sincerely want them to succeed, I'm committed to seeing them through all the steps in the Get Your Life Back program.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



# 2



## It All Starts Here Just Notice

Without even noticing, we fall into default mode with our smartphones. We just keep doing what we've always done without much thought. But in step one, you're going to back up and take a close look at how you interact with your phone.

All it requires is creating a mental cue that makes you stop and think before reaching for your phone. Instead of being on autopilot, this cue will help you pause for just long enough to ask yourself a few questions.

- *Why am I reaching for this right now? What's my real, underlying motive?*
- *How do I feel by the time I set my phone back down? What's going on in my head?*
- Give extra attention to this one: *How much time did I spend on my phone **beyond** what I intended?*

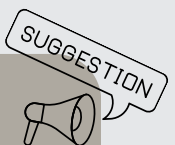
To create this mental cue, clip a paperclip to your phone, if you can. If you can't, wrap a rubber band around it or put a sticker on it. This is meant to remind you to keep these questions in mind during the next two days of close observance.

This step will take **48 hours** to complete. At some point during this process, *preferably on day one*, write down what you're noticing. This brings it into greater conscious awareness.

### Strong Finish

**Report to your accountability partner(s) on what you noticed.**

To make this step even more effective, create a home screen listing the questions mentioned above, even if it's just a picture taken of these questions written in your own handwriting.



# 3



## Spell it Out

# Why Do You Want This?

Stop and think. Why are you doing this? What's your core motivation for making these changes?

As you may know, change happens when the pain of staying the same is greater than the effort it takes to make a new choice. As you choose to strike a healthier balance with your smartphone, what is it you want in return?

In this step, you'll identify your reasons for doing this. And to be honest, if your reasons aren't clear enough or big enough, your good intentions may not last. But if there's a lot on the line for you--if you've got a lot to lose--you're perfectly positioned for massive change.

**Think about the cost your screen use has had on you. What's been lost? What's being jeopardized, even now? How does it feel to know that? And what happens if you do nothing about it?**

**Describe what it is you want to get back. What would that look like? How would that feel? Picture the specific ways your life would improve if you made these changes.**

As you consider these thoughts and questions, take time to write it all out. Then post your "Why Statement" somewhere you'll see it so you can push onward when it would be easy to quit.

## Strong Finish

**Report to your accountability partner(s) and share your Why.**



# 4



## Dumb it Down

# Get Out of Tech's Death Grip

For the first time ever, we carry a piece of tech around with us almost constantly. It can feel like a ticket to freedom and a ball and chain all at once. Making sure tech is there to improve our lives rather than take them over requires ongoing, intentional effort.

In this step, you're going to make your smartphone less appealing so it won't keep robbing you of the moments you don't want to miss out on.

Your phone is about to lose some of its grip on you. Are you ready?

- 1 NEW HOME SCREEN.** Put a new screen saver on your phone. Here are some home screen design ideas. Free downloads are available on our website. Feel free to create your own version.

**TODAY ONLY  
COMES ONCE**

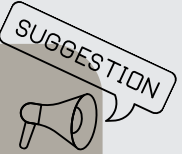
**BE FULLY  
PRESENT**

**Put First  
Things First**

- 2 HOUSEKEEPING.** Delete any apps you don't use or that have no value to you. Remove any that interfere with what you want MORE than time on that app. By cleaning out your phone in this way, you're freeing up brain space and decluttering your mind.

- 3 SAY GOODBYE.** Remove all social media apps, YouTube, Netflix, and any other life-robbing apps. If there are apps you're not ready to break up with yet, you can always access them from a desktop computer or TV. Why would you do this crazy thing? You already answered that yourself in step two. Go back and review why.

As an alternative to number 3, you could always tuck those tempting apps away in folders, making them harder to access. At some point though, you'll have to decide what you REALLY want most: time on your phone or time living your best life?



## Your Phone is NOT Who You Are

Sure, it feels like you can't live without that handheld device. And how many of us DON'T freak out when we lose or forget our phones? But the idea that we CAN'T be okay and CAN'T survive without them is a red flag indicating overdependence.

How do we change that? *By coming to love and know ourselves better than we love and know our phones.*

YOU are *irreplaceable*. Your phone is not.

No one else who ever existed on this planet has ever been or will ever be just like you--even if you're an identical twin. That's the absolute truth.

On the other hand, smartphones are manufactured by the millions, all of them exactly the same.

Our phones tend to be a reflection of who we are--from the apps we keep to our search histories and text messages. But they are NOT us.

In the next step, you'll exchange some of your phone time for time spent getting to know and love the one-of-a-kind original model you are.

**Strong Finish**

**Report to your  
accountability partner(s)  
how these 3 action items went  
for you**



## Improve Your Focus

# Give it a Rest for Awhile

What's the big deal about being fully present?

For one, it can save your life as a driver when you have to make a split-second decision to dodge an oncoming car. But really being present can also save a relationship with someone you deeply care about.

Being more present can effect how well you do in school, how alert you are to danger, and how well your senses respond to changes in the environment. Living this way also builds resilience and makes you more able to adapt to hardship.

If we're always plugged into the online world, we become reflections of other people's views and thoughts. But as you give yourself the gift of uninterrupted time to be with *your own* thoughts, you'll begin to discover the unique being who's really there under your skin. And you'll learn what that person wants most from life.

Sadly, the ability to think deeply for long periods of time, or to focus on a task without getting side-tracked, are being compromised. And yet, they're essential.

Dr. Victoria Dunckley asks, who will be left behind in the end? *The person who cannot concentrate* (95, *The Opt-Out Family*).

On the next page, you'll learn 3 pro-self action items that will allow for more restorative sleep, help you give your undivided attention to the things that matter most, and to stay alert while you drive (for those who are drivers).

## If Sleep, Focus and Safety Matter to You, Try This!

1

**STAY ASLEEP.** Sleep with your phone WAY out of reach. Out of your room, ideally. If that means getting an alarm clock, DO IT! You'll feel much more rested.

The value of a good night's sleep doesn't only effect your energy, it effects your health, your digestion, and your mental clarity. Protect your sleep by removing digital distractions at night.

2

**THE SOCK METHOD.** If you've got a test to study for, a report that's due, a crucial conversation to have with someone, or just want to ease your frazzled mind, this will be your new favorite way to do those things like a boss!

Here's what to do. Put your phone on silent and stuff it into multiple pairs of socks, alternating the direction of each sock as you go. This simple technic makes it less likely you'll want to check your phone for the dozens of reasons we have for doing so. Then, put your phone out of reach so you can focus.

This is the secret to reclaiming your level of efficiency! After two weeks of doing this consistently (try it daily), it will become your new favorite practice!

3

**WHILE YOU DRIVE.** If you're a driver, this will be a pivotal shift for you! It's so tempting to send a quick text, look up a song or address while you drive. But it only takes a split second to drive off the road, to run into a pole or swerve into oncoming traffic.

In order to set a better example for up-and-coming drivers, to ensure you make it safely to your destination, and to enjoy a calm mind while on the road, you'll want to make a firm commitment to this powerful practice.

Here's what that looks like.

**FIRST,** Set up your map, podcast or music BEFORE putting the vehicle into drive.

**NEXT,** Notice how often you think of reaching for your phone. Pay attention to that urge, as you did in step two. If you **MUST** use your phone, pull over first before you do.

**FINALLY,** Decide what matters more to you: checking your phone, or keeping a calm, focused mind while on the road.

**Strong Finish**

**Report to your  
accountability partner(s)  
on what you did.**

SUGGESTION



Something else you might try is leaving your phone at home if you're not going to be gone very long. Do this on purpose to prove you'll be okay without it for a while. It makes a statement that proves, "See? I'm just fine without you!"

SUGGESTION



Another trick to try while driving is to toss your phone in the back seat or, if you're with someone, put them in charge of the phone. This step is especially important to report to your accountability partner(s) on. There should really be ongoing support groups to help people with this one.





## Set the Tone

# Align Your Environment

Your home environment says a lot about you. If you want to send the signal that online living is what matters most, keep screens going all the time in every room, encouraging all who enter to remain disconnected from each other to ensure that time on devices is your highest priority.

Or not.

If people and moments are what you really want to emphasize, set the stage to support those priorities by making a few adjustments.

## Draw the Line

1. **WINDOW SIGN.** Put a sign on your front window that says “This is a Screen Less, Live More Home – Where People and Moments Come First.” If you want, you can order a window decal from our online store (<https://tame-your-tech.org/store/>), or make one of your own!
2. **PHONE BOX.** Set a box inside your front door where phones can take a break as people enter. Use an old shoe box or order a custom-made wooden one from our store. It might say, “Give it a Rest” on it, or something similar.
3. **SACRED SPACES.** This one is BIG! Set aside specific times and places where screens *won't* interfere. Like in bedrooms and bathrooms. During mealtime. Establish new, healthier norms about how and when screens are allowed. Many families only allow the internet to be used in an open, central location within the home. Others expect phones to be turned in at a certain time each night. **Decide what this will look like and post the new boundaries in a visible location.** What happens when a boundary is crossed? And what message are you really trying to send? Think it out. Talk it out.

# Why This Matters

So much of the time, the online world is allowed to intrude on our time and command so much of our attention. The clamor of news, notifications, alerts and posts are so enticing. And they can be urgent and important, too.

If we let it, this ‘always plugged in’ way of living could easily consume every waking hour. But some of us aren’t sure this is what’s best for us.

What’s it really worth to always have things our way? To be so over-productive and task-oriented that we miss out on a child’s need to talk about what happened at school that day? Or the reason for that bubbling laughter spilling over from the other room?

Some have called today’s population *the loneliest generation*. Maybe that’s because we don’t stop to notice each other as much. We’re too busy checking notifications on our phones, answering emails, watching just one more reel.

For those wanting to reverse that trend, it’s going to take bold, consistent steps to live counterculturally. But it’s only by doing so that we might remind those around us, **“I see you. I hear you. I care about what happens to you. And I want to be there for you.”**

There’s no way to put a price on that. It’s the greatest hunger in each of us today--to know that our lives matter MORE than the latest viral video or newsflash.

For all of us, it’s a lot to compete with, this online world. And yet, really seeing each other, really paying attention to the breathtaking world surrounding us--these things have the power to heal our broken, lonely society.

Let your home environment be the place where change begins.

## Strong Finish

Report to your accountability partner(s) on how you upgraded your environment.



# 7



## Level Up

# The Power of Community

The siren pull of our screens is so enticing, it's hard for any of us--even those with fully developed brains!--to turn away. And that's on purpose. Big Tech is a multi-billion dollar power house that knows exactly how to appeal to our cravings and interests. After all, being able to hold our attention is massively profitable!

As Jonathan Haidt says (*The Anxious Generation*), if we're going to reverse this trend, it will take collective action to do so.

Once you've reached Step 7, you've set the stage perfectly for taking this to the next level. This is the sweet spot many will get to, but most will struggle to implement. It's up to you to decide which group you belong to.

In this final, culminating step, you'll collect a group of people who want to live life on purpose on a whole new level.

Don't worry. It's not complicated. It's not even that time-consuming. However, it will be hugely rewarding.

In a society that's so divided and individualistic, the obvious anti-dote to that is to gather. To hold each other in close confidence. In fact, the twin anti-dote to compulsive smartphone use is **community** paired with **nature immersion**. And thankfully, both are abundantly available at no charge!

# Start a Learn & Grow Club

Great news! Now that you're spending less time on a screen, you have more time to do the things that bring true enjoyment and actual fulfillment.

Invite a few people to check in with each other once a month to report on what everyone is learning, what skills you're building, and what new things you're trying.

Your invitation might look something like this:



It only takes 3 people to get this rolling. Once you've built a little momentum, others are likely to want to join. Don't make the group too big. If there get to be more than 10 people, consider splitting the group in half.

Those who have tried this say it's one of the highlights of their month. If you want to improve your health, start a new business, try raising bees or learn to sew your own kimono, this group will support you and celebrate with you along the way.

**Strong Finish**

**Report to your  
accountability partner(s)  
on where you'll go from here.**



**Congratulations for Being**  
*a Brave Rebel*  
**and for Choosing**  
*Real Life*  
**Over Comfort & Conformity**

Welcome to the Movement.

Let's Change the Norm.

Together.

For those wanting to reclaim their focus, their time, their attention and highest priorities, Get Your Life Back takes you through a 7-step plan that will liberate you from the stranglehold tech can have on us.

As a way to preserve what it means to be human, to be seen and known and understood, this guidebook has been created to give people everywhere a healthy alternative to living a tech-drenched life.

If you sense that there's got to be more, if you're seeking fulfillment but haven't found it yet, it may just be a matter of putting tech in its place so you can clear your mind enough to know what it is you really want.

With simple clarity and a bold approach, founder Sarah Sanchez lights the way out of distractedness and disconnection in favor of living with wholehearted intention.

