

# Navigating the Digital Jungle

## Where tech meets family life

### EP 01: Smartphone Safari

Sue: Welcome to Navigating the Digital Jungle, where tech meets family life, with me, Sue Atkins, parenting author and broadcaster. And I'm delighted to be here today with my friends, Tara Jones, an ed-tech consultant, working with families and schools around tools and interventions for healthy screen time with PHOMO Tech, and Angeline Corvaglia, creator of Data Girl and Friends, videos to empower young minds with online safety and AI literacy. And we're delighted that you've joined us. And we're all here together to guide you through the digital jungle. In this rapidly evolving digital landscape, understanding the challenges and the opportunities that technology presents to all our families is more important than ever.

But it's really overwhelming at times, isn't it? So there's always a lot in the media about the dangers of smartphones or AI or cyberbullying or the mental health of our kids. And as parents, it's really tough navigating the complexities of raising children in a connected world, and I'm here with friends to share our insights, our tips and our reflections with you. Whether you're a tech enthusiast, a parent seeking guidance or simply curious about the interplay between technology and family life, this podcast offers a unique blend of expertise and perspectives to help your whole family thrive in the digital age. Together, we'll explore how to harness the power of technology while maintaining a healthy balance in our family lives. And I'm really delighted that you're embarking on this exciting adventure with us as we delve into the multifaceted world of smartphones, technology, parenting and families. We are really looking forward to connecting with you, answering your questions, seeing how you get on with our quick win family changes and hearing from you as we all navigate a digital jungle together.

So Tara, tell us a little bit about what you do.

Tara: Thanks Sue. Previously a deputy head and spent lots of time working with schools. I now work with schools still, but parents to navigate the complexities of phone use and digital literacy. So it's prioritizing students' and young people's wellbeing across the curriculum and in homes.

And we're thinking about how to protect from harms of the internet and social media. We want our children to grow up equipped to deal with them. And I suppose my tagline is I encourage healthy, happy phone use.

Sue: Wonderful.

Angeline, how about you? Tell us a bit about yourself.

Angeline: The biggest part of my career was I was actually an executive in finance and then in the software industry.

And I recently just dropped everything and I founded Data Girl and Friends. It started with videos just for different groups, children. Young children who don't or not online and then youth who already online and parents who don't know what to do about it, just started I created videos and now there's games. Kind of to build a bridge between parents and children online and offline and try to make them safer, get conversations going because I believe that the only thing we can do with AI, because I'm really focused on AI, where it is helping you understand where it is. The only thing we can do is have critical thinking and empathy. So that's what my focus is, is educating the generations to work together to recognize AI. And all the impacts it has on safety and privacy.

So that's what I'm doing now. No more executives, no more finance.

Sue: So let's kick off with smartphones. This week, we're diving into, of course, smartphones. You may have heard of Jonathan Haidt, who has written a book that's caught the world by storm. And I went to see him in action up in London last week speaking.

He's even caught the attention of Oprah Winfrey, and his book is called *The Anxious Generation, How the Great Rewiring of Childhood is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness*. And he's calling for parents to delay giving their kids smartphones until they're at least 14, no social media before 16, and phone-free schools, and more independent play for kids.

Or, you might have heard about Smartphone Free Childhood. That's a grassroots movement on a mission to keep childhood smartphone free. And they want to connect parents in their local communities to make it easier to say no to kids pester power when they say, Oh, but everyone else has one. And in fact, I wrote a free guide around what actually to say and how to say it to your kids to give you confidence.

And you can download that for free on my website. So Tara, what's your take on this explosion of interest in smartphones? I read that Ofcom has discovered that 97 percent of 12-year-olds have smartphones and nearly a quarter of UK five to seven-year-olds now have their own smartphone. What do you reckon?

Tara: First of all, I'm not shocked by the statistics, Sue. So I've done a career in schools, I was a deputy head teacher, and whilst that statistic around the younger age group really shocks me, and we'll come back to that, I'm going to focus on this 97 percent of 12-year-olds having phones. I do a lot of work with year six students as they're starting high school and that transition, and I get it.

I understand why parents see this time, this period, as sort of a rite of passage to hand over the smartphone because we see this huge increase in independence. You know, students are likely traveling on a bus for the first time, some maybe navigating one or two buses. And we have got to make this point, no parents are trying to do any damage to their children by giving them phones.



Okay, but I don't think we had previously all the research we do have now around smartphone use. If we go back to that percentage, if 97 percent of our 12-year-olds have got phones and we understand why they've ended up having them, what can we do now to support and to educate and to help families navigate the complexity of smartphone use?

The title of the podcast is Smartphone Sue, that's crucial, isn't it? There's a big difference between a smartphone and other types of phones. We're ultimately handing over everything. The internet that access

Sue: and we're not bashing people who have given their kids smartphones younger because that's just how it is and people say, Oh, but the horse is bolted.

Well, it hasn't really. And I've written a great deal around all this on sub stack and it's important not to, you know, give up. But it's also important to understand why parents would do when they start going on trains and buses or they're delayed playing football or netball or something. So what do you think we can do to help parents then when they, you know, are trying to navigate it?

Tara: Well, I think it starts with education and it starts with that piece around, okay, this is how it's been done. You've mentioned the smartphone free childhood movement, you know, and they're saying it's always been done this way. So, yes, historically, we have seen children getting phones at this crucial age, and now we're starting to question the why, the what type of phones, and what are the risks associated with a smartphone at that age?

So, there's some work to be done to understand the risks, to understand why. You know, full access to a phone, unlimited has become the gold standard, hasn't it? You think about all the adverts we see, unlimited data, get more.

Sue: But you know, you're right because smartphones for me are fantastic. I love my smartphone.

The creativity, the things I can do, you know, from just sitting in a chair, from, you know, online banking to writing a blog. But, We tend to overprotect children in the real world and under protect them in the online world. And we need to find that balance, don't we?

Because you don't have to have a smartphone where you go, you've got all the algorithms, you've got all the apps, you've got all the access to the internet.

You know, at that crucial point of going to secondary school or going at 14 to a different school, perhaps, or younger, you can have a flip phone, a phone that doesn't have access to all the dangerous y bits. Just to delay it, I'm not a fan of banning anything. Soon as I go on a diet, I want cake. So the idea of banning anything makes it more curious for kids to want them.

I mean, what do you think, Angeline, about this?



Angeline: Well, I'm kind of lucky because even before my daughter was born, I have a young daughter. My best friend warned me about the impacts of screen time on my daughter. So I tried from the very beginning to give her as little as possible. And I have every understanding for parents who aren't managing to do that because I didn't manage to do it.

I did give her a tablet. I don't remember a few years ago, but I realized because my friend warned me, I realized that this impact it was having on her. Also, she has, has an illness, so I have to be aware of her brain. So I took it away very quickly. And there was a lot of discussions about, you know, Every few other people have it, even at a young age, other people have it and it's so much fun and games and I can learn, but I could, I just saw the impact it had on her.

So I just wasn't going to give it back. And that's actually one of the reasons that I started Data Girl and Friends. Because I wanted to be able to explain, I started with young kids who don't have much experience on the internet. So they explain concepts and I started with about safety and you know, personal data and all of this.

And I do have one that I called, Why can't I put my phone down? I was written for a young flight and it just like, and it explains young children's language around two or three minutes. What it is, you know, the notifications and all the excitement and the, the wanting for, for external connections. And, uh, they watch and then she watched it and then she.

Actually, I could still couldn't believe it. I'm her mom. So she probably listens more to what I say. She said, I understand now why you don't want me to have a phone and she stopped asking for it. I'm not making this up. I don't know. I said, I have the mom advantage, but actually, and I think one thing going to back what you were also saying, Tara.

Um, is that, uh, I've also seen that parents maybe, because we did not grow up in the digital, I didn't have a dumb phone until I was 25, you know, we can't imagine, and I think they know a lot more than we think they do and they understand a lot more than we think they do. So if we present them with facts, that's why I've tried to do it in a fun way because you know, like videos and games, I mean, if we present them with facts and managed to get a discussion going, then we can find a compromise. And that's kind of what data girl and friends is about is little snippets of fact, and also what you said about over protecting in the offline world and under protecting in the online world. You know, also that is just about having confidence as parents that you can do this, you do not need to know, you don't need to know about AI.

It's nice to find out, we'll probably talk about it at a different time, but the impacts, why smartphones are so addictive is, you know, uh, a word is often used is because of the, a lot of the AI. So you don't have to know how AI works, but you know how to protect your child. You know it, or you have to use the same principles online as offline.

Sure.

Sue: I mean, Tara, you've got four boys. Tell us about how you navigate all different ages, all different experiences. Talk about that and tell us how you manage that.



Tara: Uh, through conversation. So lots of talking and discussion, a stepped approach. So my son is going to secondary school in September. So I've got a child in the age group, I'm working with this age group of kids, lots of discussion. And sometimes I of course get the, I'm the only one with these controls. I'm the only one with screen time. Mom, it's so unfair. And generally. I will bring you and boil it down to, I'm sorry, I love you. And this is how I'm going to keep you safe because you're confident.

This act is from a place of love. So he does have a phone. He does have access to communicate with his friends, but it's under guidance and restriction. And the confidence you can come from. And this is a great tip to parents in that age group we're talking about 11, 12. What are the age restrictions on the apps?

So WhatsApp, for example, has been in the press a lot recently.

Sue: Yeah, cause it has, yeah. And

Tara: WhatsApp, it's frustrating, but they've brought it down from 16 to 13. But we've still got till 13 guys. We've still got till 13 parents. So if your child's in year seven and there are WhatsApp groups for their football team, for their, uh, friendship groups, and you want them to use it, use that restriction.

I'm going to let you have access to this. Yeah. The recommended guidance is 13, so you are allowed access to this with parental supervision. You know, you can use that as a guidance to the rules. So my son, we have a phone check policy. Yes, he's got it. I can check-in. There'll be some debate in our listeners here, Sue.

I don't know if we can take this discussion. Is he old enough to have access to messaging with friends? The app says not, do I want him to be able to communicate with restrictions, with guidance and with parental supervision?

Sue: It's interesting. Cause I was listening to Jeremy Vine and a woman rang in and her son was year six and they started a WhatsApp group for the year sixes and he was sort of all part of it and it was all exciting and all the rest of it within three hours, he'd had 400 messages and he was almost in tears.

They weren't horrible ones. They weren't cyberbullying or anything, but they were overwhelming him with notifications. And, you know, because mum was interested and said to him and chatted with him, conversations are so important for connection. She said, would you like me to take you out of the group? And you can blame me.

And he just visually just went, yes, please. Cause he couldn't cope with all the notifications and that's not even nasty things. So it's hard. I mean, How do you do it even with your three year old then because you know, they're all growing up with all this tech.

Tara: Yeah.

Sue: How do you navigate that?



Tara: And growing up around other devices.

Yeah. And seeing older brothers. Yes. And then thinking, why can't I? Why can't I do that? I would bring it back to, you've mentioned Jonathan Haidt earlier in this um, in this conversation. And I really think one of his statements about experience blockers is key.

Sue: Yes.

Tara: He says your phone is an experience blocker.

You will spend less time in the presence of people. You're not with friends. You're sleeping less. You're in nature. You're reading fewer books. You don't have time for anything else. Navigating with children is difficult and screens can sometimes be a go to when you need that breather, yeah? But the minute it starts to become an experience blocker and you're not taking your children outside and you're not reading books and you're not playing and you're not doing those things.

That's when you take a pause, I think, for a sense check. And to that point, I have a friend with a child of a, well, a few years older, he's five, and I'm sure she won't mind me sharing this. Lots of conversations. She wanted to limit tablet time. It wasn't a phone, but had a tablet. So she tried a strategy of it being in the car.

You know, long journeys. Yeah, yeah. But he then picked up an association that his tablet was linked to the car. Yes. And when they were out places.

Sue: He wanted it.

Tara: She didn't realize it at first, wanted to get back in the car. Oh my God. Yeah. So talk about an experience blocker. He's out having a play date or he's gone somewhere and the pull of the devices.

Yes. As you mentioned, Angeline, the pull of the devices, the persuasive technologies is such that these developing brains. That was fun. You know, they're fun. They're great. They're addictive. Yeah, that was fun. I want to get back in the car so I can have my tablet time.

Sue: I mean, what's interesting also, uh, I don't know if you find this, Angeline, lots of people say, Oh, but you know, they're learning to count.

The younger they are, they're borrowing mum's or being given mum or dad's phone. Oh no, it is educational. But a lot of these apps are particularly good. And of course, then you think you're sort of justifying perhaps the fact that they're on it for a long time because they're learning something. How do you handle that with your eight-year-old?

Angeline: Well, we were discussing before this started about research and I just was reading about this yesterday. It's really questionable, to put it nicely, that if young children actually learn from these apps. I've read numerous research where they aren't really learning, and I saw it with my daughter. She wasn't learning from it.





She was just pushing and, and like to see the stuff moving around and it's discussion. I agree with you, Tara. Uh, just discussion. I, I don't see any other, any other outlet. I've also spoken to a number of people and I, uh, a fantastic privacy lawyer from, from California who just blew me away how she manages.

She's a pro technology and she lets her children have technology really early. But they can only have it if they go through the privacy settings and the age restrictions in detail, like sentence for sentence. And they have the, the, the rules and obviously normal people don't understand privacy policies.

I don't understand privacy policies, but you're in the UK. You're very lucky because you have this child-friendly code.

Sue: And the online safety bill sort of thing as well, a bit. Yeah.

Angeline: And, but you have the privacy policies written in ways that children can understand. So anyone can understand it. I posted about two that I found that was Microsoft, I think was one and Lego was absolutely fantastic.

But so there are, there are ways now that the governments are kind of helping parents out to, to be able to have these discussions and that the children to understand because As you said, Tara and also Sue, that if you talk to them, they're still not always going to like it.

They're also out for their own good, right?

They're going to understand. Yeah.

Sue: We're there to be their parent, not their friend, and we know some of the dangers and where they can go. I mean, the other thing is, Tara, you know, you talk a lot with your kids about privacy settings and I've written about it because I did a bit of research. Not many parents put in parental controls.

Why? I wonder why that is and why are they frightened of the tech to do that or they don't like the conversations?

Tara: They're quite complicated as well. Are they? They can be complicated. Okay. guidance out there. Yes. This community of people wanting to talk about, I call it healthy, happy phone use.

Sue: Yes.

Tara: And I quite often referred to as a screen time researcher.

Now screen time as a metric is actually a little bit unhelpful because screen time is just a blanket. You could have 30 minutes of quite detrimental screen time. You could have an hour and a half that's relatively positive. Again, there's not a quick way to figure that out. My 11-year-old loves listening to audibles. He will consume audiobooks. Healthy use of screen time. It will still go into a screen time metric.



Sue: Aha.

Tara: You know, so we have to go beyond just saying, Oh, I'm going to let my children have an hour of screen time. Okay. An hour on what? Are you going to keep an eye on it? Yeah.

Are you going to check what they're doing?

So phone use needs and screen time, these terms even need unpicking. So it's a, hey Sue, it's a digital jungle out there. It's absolutely why we're navigating and having these conversations. How can we give bits of information easily to parents so they can make informed choices for their children.

Sue: Yes, exactly that, and this is what we're trying to do in Bite Size Bits.

Each week we'll be talking about different subjects and our take on it as family with kids, you know, as former teachers and things like that. So, you know, I'm mindful now of coming down on sort of what do we think? What are your thoughts? Tara, what are your thoughts? Banning phones? What's balance or ban is my kind of thing.

What do you think?

Tara: I don't really think banning anything works.

Sue: Yeah. No.

Tara: So definitely I wouldn't be for a ban. It would be for balance and careful considered steps to how it's going to work for your family, your setting and your children. No age doesn't help either. Think about the maturity of children.

One 12-year-old versus another 12-year-old. True. So. We're quite used to things happening quickly now in our society, aren't we? And usually parents will say to me, what do I do, Tara?

You know, is there an app for that? Can I do that? You've got to really consider what the balance looks like. How can you achieve healthy, happier phone use in your household, including parents, our own phone use.

And lead by example. This conversation is going to help everyone in the home.

Sue: And also talk to your partner. If you have one about it, I've just written an article about divorce and co-parenting and smartphones and tech, because that's another minefield, but you're right. So that everyone is singing from the same song sheet that you explain, you talk, you guide and you chat about it.

And it. It's incremental as they get more mature or they show more responsibility and they can have, it's not a right. It's a sort of a privilege. It's a balance. Finding this balance is elusive. So all I want people to do is think about that for your family. Angeline, what do you think?





Angeline: No, I agree. Balance is the best, uh, is the best way forward.

I do think certain environments like schools, they should be banned because it's just too distracting. Uh, I, I think banned and also bedrooms, uh, and considering, you know, all this kind of sextortion horrific, horrific things going on. I think at least until I don't know, very old age to really get by an alarm clock, a physical alarm clock and put it next to the bed.

So you don't have an excuse to need the phone to wake up. So I do think certain in, but as, as you both already said, I mean, it's really about knowing your family, knowing your child, as I said before, really look out for very, very first signs that something is maybe not, not exactly as it should be. And, and start those conversations.

It won't always be easy. I mean, if we think about the fact that this generation is growing up, absolutely observed in ways that we couldn't even imagine. I mean, no. The parents, you know, everywhere, everything you look at, everyone, I don't know, everyone you talk to, but everywhere you go, because you have it on your phone.

And, you know, this is something that, that, that we all have to kind of find the balance to respecting them, them growing and, and their need for independence, but also our need to keep them safe. Yeah. So, uh, as you said, Tara, there's no simple answer, unfortunately.

Sue: But hopefully we've got people thinking about it and working it through.

So that leads me on to talking about World Digital Detox Day. Time for a word from our collaboration partner.

Today's episode of Navigating the Digital Jungle is brought to you in collaboration with World Digital Detox Day, an international movement dedicated to reclaiming our lives from the overwhelming grip of technology. So, are you feeling overwhelmed by screens and technology? Take a break and join millions of people around the world on World Digital Detox Day.

Because it's the perfect opportunity to unplug, unwind and reconnect with the world around you, for your mental health and your family and children's wellbeing. Join this important movement with over seven and a half million people worldwide and visit [worlddigitaldetoxday.com](http://worlddigitaldetoxday.com) to learn more about becoming involved with the world's largest digital well-being initiative.

Start your digital detox journey today to better mental health and well-being for your whole family.

Now this leads us on, Tara, to family change. Do you want to tell us about that?



Tara: Yeah, well, we talk about challenges, don't we, and challenge and goal setting, and I prefer the language of Change. Can you make a small change, a little adjustment? And I was inspired for this, there is a viral video, I believe it's Masterfoods if you were to try and look it up on YouTube, it is glorious. Adults come into this room and they're interviewed. You can sit down and have a meal with anyone. And they're choosing celebrities, you know, one, a husband winds up his wife and, you know, says, you'd go for Kim Kardashian. She's like, don't tell him, you know, and they're all plucking these, you know, is it somebody alive? Is it somebody dead? And the adults are picking sporting heroes. Celebrities, and then the children come into the room and the children say, can it be family? Can it be mom? Can it be dad? And the parents watch it back and there's, you know, chills and kind of tears and it's, all our children want is to have a meal with us and that time.

And they didn't even enter into that world of somebody famous or somebody impressive, because the most impressive people to our children is us. Yeah. And it's family and meal times are precious. And it's captured beautifully in that video. We'll put that in the show notes. I think beautiful.

Angeline: Amazing. Yeah.

Tara: Yeah. And Oh, yeah. Well, good luck. She'll watch it through tears and lots of the parents, you know, because they did, they had no idea what the children were going to say, thinking, you know, who might they pick my, my three year old right now, I'd assume he was going to pick a Paw Patrol character like Chase or Marshall, you know, but all these children meal times.

And if I look back on my own childhood, I'm one of five. I can think about it being a really precious time sitting down, scrapping over, you know, who gets the last piece of bread in the middle of the table. But it's a crucial family time. It's a time for conversations, reflections.

You can really, regardless, even our teenagers, we would get the best conversations around the table, but we have a very strict family rule.

No phones, no devices anywhere near the table. Even if I'm waiting for a very important meeting or a call, you can't bend the rules here. It needs to be a non-negotiable. Keep your phones away and protect that precious time with your family.

Sue: So if people are gonna grab their digital machetes and tackle this together, what's your family change?

For this week, and we'll ask people to let us know how they get on and email us at [thedigitaljungle.com](mailto:thedigitaljungle.com). Tell us what the challenge is, alterate change.

Tara: Yeah, it's just to put those phones away at mealtimes and if you can far away, you know, yeah. I suppose. Well, you know,

Sue: I've just written some tips actually for the sun and I put out a phone jail so you make it a bit funny, you know, and all that and you find wherever you're going to put it in a box where you're going to hide it.



Make it a fun thing to do that. Come on now, we got to put all the phones in the digital, you know, jail and then do put it somewhere else and turn off the notifications because you don't want it to go off and all that. And literally, as you build it, as you're not nagging about eating the broccoli and holding the knife and fork properly, but you're chin wagging and chatting.

Everyone will start to enjoy that time a bit more. Chatting about the day saying what went well, or whatever you do to stay connected as a family and people will look forward to it and they won't mind putting away their phones. So we'd love to hear from you. If you try our family change this week, how do you get on?

Where do you put them? Do you put them in some sort of strange place that someone else would find funny and could copy? So do let us know. And also while I'm on this. Do send us in some questions, if you've got any questions for any of us, please send them in and we'll do our best to answer them in the podcast.

There'll be show notes as well for you to look at, videos that, you know, you've mentioned Tara, all sorts of stuff, but definitely that's this week's one. Listener questions. So listen, Angeline, tell us about some questions that did come in already.

Angeline: Well, there was the question that came in about the impacts of internet usage on the developing brain.

I think that's a very, uh, very interesting question. I keep talking about research because we have to understand it's all so new that even scientists don't quite agree on this. But obviously we're not going to wait for scientists to figure it out. So for example, we've spoken about addiction and actually what we need to understand is that children and youth brains aren't yet fully formed.

So they actually have trouble, uh, controlling impulses and stopping themselves from doing things. And this is combined with the features and apps. And I mentioned, that's why I'm a little obsessed with AI. You need to understand that. The whole thing is a little, uh, it's filled with AI in every corner that's, uh, gonna do things just to get you to go back to it.

Like the endless scroll notifications and continuous feedback that can lead to addictive behaviors and that has, has an impact. And also on social skills that especially teens, young teens, it's very important for them to learn to build complex emotional relationships, like in small groups and one by one in order to build empathy and emotional intelligence.

But the online is often one sided. So it seems like socializing, but it's not quite the same thing. Um, specifically around cognitive development, there's some disagreement, but I think we should always err on the cautious side that some studies have shown that, that it, and we've seen as parents, I mean, as we were saying before, the child's ability to pay attention to remember things and to stay focused, the more they're online, the more, the more that's impacted, we can see it, as parents, we don't necessarily need scientists to tell us that I don't know, Tara and Sue, what do you think about that?



Tara: I think you're absolutely right to call out the science and some of the, the questions around sciences. It feels really overwhelming, doesn't it? We do know some of the impacts and we, we talk about child development and brain development and as a parent, Instant reaction is, Oh my gosh, you know, what are we possibly doing here?

So the language of addiction as well comes with some weight to it. So I, I, it's continuing to look at the research to understand and to think about those subtle changes. There was another research paper that looked at the fact that conscious and control changes to phone use that can then help with an overall well-being.

It's that excessive use we've got to worry about, isn't it? Once we hit that excessive use, we hit those sorts of developmental problems.

Sue: And is that excessive use, do you think intuitive? Or I mean, cause you know, cause so what is excessive use? Well, I suppose if you find yourself using it on the toilet, you know, and you can't leave it downstairs for an hour while you go upstairs for something.

Is that, that's sort of bordering on excessive, isn't it?

Tara: Yeah. And there are some metrics around it. And again, without wanting to come across as too scary, we do know once we start to hit really excessive use now, I've jumped ahead, sorry, here to adolescence in some respects, we start to see some, you know, feelings of inadequacy.

We can see suicidal ideation being linked to specific excessive hours. We're talking about, you know, when we were hitting that sort of nine hours a day, there is a linked metric seven to nine and I can see you're shocked Sue, but in You know, five, six, seven hours is not uncommon, you know, more than anything, it's, it's common practice.

So of course we're going to see an impact of that sort of excessive use. And I think that's what we need to be really aware of, but on the flip side to that, there's also some studies to show that it only takes a minor tweak in smartphone usage for lots of us to start to see a noticeable difference and an improvement.

Yeah. So that's the positive. Yeah. You know, we, we can. Still make some changes and awareness of the negativity and the obsessive use has to be there and it's got to be in the narrative.

Sue: And it's trying to balance it back to play, isn't it? And things are interesting offline, not just, Oh, come off it. And I talk about it.

I've just written a new book and I talk about like, you know, come off it. You don't run a marathon and just put on your tracksuit and run 26 miles. You have to sort of train for it. So it's the same sort of thing about looking at your smartphone or your tech use and think, well, I'll come off it incrementally.

So mindful Mondays, tech free Tuesdays, you know, family fun Fridays, you get the idea, so make it fun in your house around, just maybe thinking about your own as a family, come off it for an hour or so. I know Angeline on Sundays, you do switch off Sunday, don't you? And go for, I don't know, out in the fresh air or something, don't you? What do you do?



Angeline: Well, I'm lucky I live near the sea, so I don't have to think very much about what to do. But, but yeah, just alternatives. And my daughter absolutely loves it. We have Sunday because she is also at school on Saturday. Um, so that is the day. So it's kind of easy to, to decide this is going to be the day where we're going to have alternatives because children and people, not just children, I think something like in America, 50 percent of adults are, are, uh, have addictive behaviors towards phones. So obviously the children are just learning from them, but, and the problem is they don't see alternatives. We'll just find something fun. I was thinking about that. Yes. How fun would it be to leave your phone at home and teach your child how to use a compass?

Like, we have to go north.

Whether you like it or not. We're gonna go out in the city, where we're going is due north, and we're gonna go take the streets, you know, something that could be fun, because now we're just using to put it into Google Maps, we follow the phone. So, so it could be, you know, fun. Back in the day, we used to make meetings with people, there were no phones, you just waited there at the store and at this, in the restaurant.

Tara: Back in the day, you did, if you wanted to speak to like a boy though, you had to call the house and speak to the parents first. Yeah, exactly. Can you imagine? Oh my gosh. You know, kids now will never know that pain of ringing the landline. You finally get the landline number and then you've got to do the awkward phone call.

Angeline: I have to use the internet. Who's on the phone? That was either internet or phone. Oh, pulling the wire out and swapping over,

Sue: of course. And I'm not even going to go there because I'm so old. So listen.

Tara: There's just one point I want to make there because we're talking about generation and generational differences.

Now, I was at university when the iPhone came out, okay? So I kind of think I basically got through it, and then it was just as I was leaving university. So we hear this language about, oh, we were the last generation. We were the last generation with some nostalgia. Again, the flip to that is we're now the first generation of parents to be informed and to have the information.

And I think we're the first generation to kind of share what we're finding out now about phones. There was a fantastic, um, post the other day about a mom who is 10 years back, 15 years. I think her daughter's about 20 something now. And she said, I didn't know then. But I know now, so I'm sharing with you, and that's the difference with the first generation to be informed on some of the problems with phone use and we can help guide our children to healthier habits.

Sue: Wonderful.



Voice Over: Now for some top tips.

Sue: So that leads me on to weekly quick tips. Quick tips. It's a little segment that we're going to do each week where we share bite sized nuggets of wisdom to help you navigate the digital jungle more effectively. So Tara, what are your quick tips for this week?

Tara: Oh, I've got to be quick.

I don't do quick. So, um, mine's to start as parents. Awareness that this is a journey, start as a parent and reflect on your own phone use. So for example, think about when you're on it, phone away at mealtimes, walking around. Just try to think what little tweaks you can make to be that role model before you start the conversations, because, hey, if you've got teenagers, you're definitely going to get called a hypocrite.

I will, guaranteed. Mom, you're always on your phone, but it's for work. Well, yeah, but do I need to have some boundaries around work? Yes.

Should I make some personal reflections before I enter into these conversations with my kids?

Sue: Good call. Lovely. Angeline, what do you reckon? What are your tips this week?

Angeline: Well, mine is a, a little bit from the, from the other perspective, cause I'm really big on building bridges between the generations. So mine is to try out an app that your child uses, that you never used before. Yeah. It'll help you understand a lot, really a lot about what makes it difficult for them. I have two examples.

I decided to try TikTok because I was told that everyone is on TikTok. So I went to TikTok and I had to actually, I had to delete it from my phone because it just kept sending me messages. It was wow. And I haven't trusted myself to go back. And also Snapchat. I got onto Snapchat because I wanted to try the AI Snapchat.

AI bot. So yeah, I can definitely recommend that because, uh, it will help you understand a lot more what the online world is for your child and understanding it will help you talk about it and will help you have more empathy. So maybe you can, um, find, find solutions together.

Sue: I like that because then you're interested in what they're interested in.

You know, why do you like that musical app and why do you do this? And what's that about? So you're connecting. The world for me is about connection and real life connections now for family. So my tips for this week, kids are scrolling and not playing, singing, running, making, creating, baking, dancing, climbing, falling.

You get the idea. So I think family fun, think ing, I, you know, activities, anything with an I N G biking, you know, anything like that, have fun away from the screens so that it's compelling to come off them because they're spending time. I always say children spell love. T. I. M E. So this week, just have a bit of fun spending time together.





Voice Over: Navigating the digital jungle with Sue Atkins and friends.

Sue: So, that's a wrap for today's episode of Navigating the Digital Jungle with Sue Atkins and Friends, remember to subscribe, leave us a review, and tune in next week as we continue our journey through the digital jungle. Visit [navigatingthedigitaljungle.com](http://navigatingthedigitaljungle.com) to find episode show notes and links to everything that we've talked about.

And join us when we talk next week about FOMO, recognizing digital addiction and social media. So jump in, join in, send us questions, stay connected with us, and we look forward to hearing from you. Until then, stay safe and keep exploring, and tell all your friends about us.

Voice Over: It's a jungle out there.

