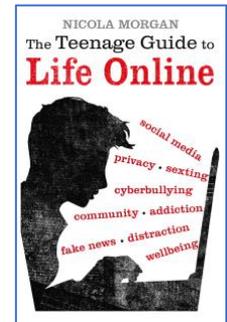


# GOOD SCREEN-TIME

TIPS from Nicola Morgan, brain and learning expert and author of many books to support young people through adolescence and beyond



Screens bring great benefits for work, social life and enjoyment but *over-use* risks negatives. People of all ages are vulnerable to over-use because we're naturally social, curious and distractible and our devices give us endless chances to be just that. My advice uses up-to-date science, deep understanding of psychology and my own tendency to love my phone too much!

## Messages for adults

1. **Set a good example.** We can't tell young people that over-use of phones is harmful, while on our phones. Would you make your child eat lettuce while you eat chocolate?
2. **Discuss, with up-to-date knowledge, why we should control screen use.** It's not just about safety or cyber-bullying but mental health, brain function and success.
3. **Create moderate rules, which will become good habits.** I believe devices should be out of sight and hearing at meals; 1.5 hours before bed until morning; and when anyone wants to talk to us. Adults should negotiate, make the rules and set an example. It's parenting.

## Messages for all

4. **Tech is not bad: over-use is bad and it's too easy to over-use.** Have tech-free periods every day. Do something fun in that time. Notice how good that feels.
5. **If you give enough time to these, you're not over-using:** physical exercise and fresh air; face-to-face interaction; your work; thinking/day-dreaming; sleep; non-screen hobbies.
6. **If you are tempted to use your device too much:** set measurable targets such as, "I will work for 45 minutes without my phone on"; investigate Apps that help you control use; agree with a friend to help each other. And see the next point.
7. **Out of sight is out of mind.** When doing anything that needs focus, put your phone OFF and out of sight. Research shows that the *presence* of a phone lowers focus and results.
8. **Never message or post if angry or upset.** Walk away and do something else. When arguments happen online, get perspective: it's nasty and feels horrible, but it will pass. Best strategy is to focus on something else until you feel calmer.
9. **Don't measure your self-worth by how many people "like" your posts.** You are worth far, far more than that.
10. **Never have a screen on between 1.5 hours before you go to bed and getting up time in the morning.** You don't need it for your alarm clock: you can buy a really cheap clock!

**The Teenage Guide to Life Online** has all the details and explanations and many more tips. You'll also find lots of help in the Life Online area of my website. I am available for all sorts of talks and consultancy on this and all aspects of adolescence, stress and wellbeing.