



The following set of articles is a seven-part series by Brad Huddleston, written for our Highway News magazine.

## **Dopamine Detox** by Brad Huddleston

The Wall Street Journal ran the captivating headline Digital Addictions Are Drowning Us in Dopamine. Stanford University Psychiatrist and professor Dr. Anna Lembke wrote:

A patient of mine, a bright and thoughtful young man in his early 20s, came to see me for debilitating anxiety and depression. He had dropped out of college and was living with his parents. He was vaguely contemplating suicide. He was also playing videogames most of every day and late into every night.

Twenty years ago the first thing I would have done for a patient like this was prescribe an antidepressant. Today I recommended something altogether different: a dopamine fast. I suggested that he abstain from all screens, including videogames, for one month.

Over the course of my career as a psychiatrist, I have seen more and more patients who suffer from depression and anxiety, including otherwise healthy young people with loving families, elite education and relative wealth. Their problem isn't trauma, social dislocation or poverty. It's too much dopamine, a chemical produced in the brain that functions as a neurotransmitter, associated with feelings of pleasure and reward.<sup>1</sup>

The practice of "Dopamine Fasting" took Silicon Valley by storm when California psychiatrist Dr. Cameron Sepah started using the technique with tech workers and venture capitalists.<sup>2</sup> However, the technique does need some clarification:

The name — dopamine fasting — is a bit of a misnomer. It's more of a stimulation fast. But the name works well enough, Dr. Sepah said.<sup>3</sup>

The reason for clarification is that fasting activities that cause the release of too much dopamine do not rid the brain of the neurotransmitter. Furthermore, many people in Silicon Valley were taking Dr. Sepah's technique to extreme measures by completely cutting out activities such as food, eye contact during conversations, and sex. Dr. Sepah advocates a more balanced approach by encouraging activities such as human interaction, which is, in fact, beneficial.<sup>4</sup>

In his *The Definitive Guide to Dopamine Fasting 2.0 - The Hot Silicon Valley Trend*, Dr. Sepah said, "Let's first understand how impulsive behaviors become problematic or addictive. If you've ever studied behaviorism in a psychology course, you may recall that 'classical conditioning' is a process which helps us learn that involves dopamine. To be clear, we ARE NOT fasting from dopamine itself, but from impulsive behaviors reinforced by it. With enough training, unconditioned stimuli we've never seen before, like a red dot or notification on your smartphone, can become conditioned stimuli, because we learn to anticipate a reward (the negative reinforcement of alleviating our negative emotions, or the positive reinforcement of seeing a novel thing). This 'double reinforcement' can lead to impulsive/addictive behavior since every time we feel bored, anxious, angry, sad or lonely, we seek those things that both numb the bad feeling and distract our attention with pleasure."<sup>5</sup>

Based in a Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) known as "stimulus control," Sepah believes that a dopamine fast can assist us in regaining "flexibility over such automatic, rigid behavior by restricting the external stimuli."<sup>6</sup>

Dr. Sepah has identified six behaviors that he considers compulsive and needs a dopamine detox:

Emotional eating  
Excessive Internet usage and gaming

Gambling and shopping  
Pornography and masturbation  
Thrill and novelty-seeking  
Recreational drugs drugs.<sup>7</sup>

At the time of this writing, dopamine detox has not been studied scientifically.<sup>8</sup> Thus, the practice has its critics, but therapists see success with the technique, which is why I'm advocating it. If we make this step of fasting from too much digital stimulation, God will gladly assist us with regaining self-control.

Proverbs 25:28 (NIV) Like a city whose walls are broken through is a person who lacks self-control.

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<sup>1</sup> Lembke, Anna. "Digital Addictions Are Drowning Us in Dopamine." The Wall Street Journal. Dow Jones & Company, August 13, 2021. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/digital-addictions-are-drowning-us-in-dopamine-11628861572>.

<sup>2</sup> Bowles, Nellie. "How to Feel Nothing Now, in Order to Feel More Later." The New York Times. The New York Times, November 7, 2019. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/07/style/dopamine-fasting.html?searchResultPosition=1>.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Akers, Whitney. "Is Dopamine Fasting a Way to Fix Your Brain or Just a Fad?" Healthline. Healthline Media, November 20, 2019. <https://www.healthline.com/health-news/what-is-dopamine-fasting#The-science-behind-dopamine-fasting>.

<sup>5</sup> Sepah, Dr. Cameron. "Dopamine Fasting 2.0: The Hot Silicon Valley Trend." Medium. The Startup, August 24, 2020. <https://medium.com/swlh/dopamine-fasting-2-0-the-hot-silicon-valley-trend-7c4dc3ba2213>.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> "Dopamine Detox: How Does It Work?" Medical News Today. MediLexicon International. Accessed March 1, 2022. <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/dopamine-detox#what-it-is>.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

## Guidance Is Scarce

While not impossible, getting help with digital addiction, and video game addiction in particular, in the US can be frustrating. One reason is because of the handbook that is used to diagnose mental disorders, which is called the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-5). Before we get into the weeds of digital addiction, a better understanding of what the DSM-5 is will prove helpful in understanding the dilemma. The American Psychiatric Association describes the manual this way:

The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) is the handbook used by health care professionals in the United States and much of the world as the authoritative guide to the diagnosis of mental disorders. DSM contains descriptions, symptoms, and other criteria for diagnosing mental disorders. It provides a common language for clinicians to communicate about their patients and establishes consistent and reliable diagnoses that can be used in the research of mental disorders. It also provides a common language for researchers to study the criteria for potential future revisions and to aid in the development of medications and other interventions.<sup>1</sup>

Regarding addiction to digital devices, an article in *Psychology Today* titled *Internet Gaming Disorder in DSM-V* described the current status:

Internet Gaming Disorder is a “Condition for Further Study” in the DSM-5 (APA 2013). This means that it is not an “official” disorder in the DSM, but one on which the American Psychiatric Association request additional research. Upon further research, the APA may or may not decide to make the disorder “official” in future editions of the DSM.<sup>2</sup>

At the time of publication of the DSM-V in 2013, there was sufficient evidence to determine if addiction to Internet gaming is “a unique mental disorder or the best criteria to classify it.”<sup>3</sup> However, addiction to gaming is identified in the section recommending conditions for further research, and the proposed symptoms include:

- Preoccupation with gaming

- Withdrawal symptoms when gaming is taken away or not possible (sadness, anxiety, irritability)
- Tolerance, the need to spend more time gaming to satisfy the urge
- Inability to reduce playing, unsuccessful attempts to quit gaming
- Continuing to game despite problems
- Deceiving family members or others about the amount of time spent on gaming
- The use of gaming to relieve negative moods, such as guilt or hopelessness
- Risk, having jeopardized or lost a job or relationship due to gaming<sup>4</sup>

The US lags behind numerous other countries that officially recognize addiction to technology as a legitimate disorder. Why? Insurance coverage. Treatment centers in the US can't bill health insurance companies for treatment because the DSM-5 does not recognize Internet addiction as a mental disorder.<sup>5</sup> Countries that do officially recognize addiction to technology as a disorder include Japan, South Korea, China, India, Italy, Taiwan, and Australia.<sup>6</sup>

While the DSM-V does not officially recognize video game addiction, the World Health Organization (WHO) does. "Gaming disorder" was added to the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD-11), which went into effect in January 2022.<sup>7</sup>

In March 2022, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition, Text Revision (DSM-5-TR), will be released.<sup>8</sup> As of this writing, I could not find any information regarding a possible revision of the Internet gaming addiction status. However, what did catch my attention is the updated version includes the "addition of International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision, Clinical Modification (ICD-10-CM) symptom codes for suicidal behavior and nonsuicidal self-injury..."<sup>9</sup> Social Psychologist Dr. Jonathan Haidt, of the NYU Stern School of Business, was featured on the documentary, *The Social Dilemma*, and said the following:

There has been a gigantic increase in depression and anxiety for American teenagers which began right around...between 2011 and

2013. The number of teenage girls out of 100,000 in this country who were admitted to a hospital every year because they cut themselves or otherwise harmed themselves, that number was pretty stable until around 2010, 2011, and then it begins going way up. It's up 62 percent for older teen girls. It's up 189 percent for the preteen girls. That's nearly triple. Even more horrifying, we see the same pattern with suicide. The older teen girls, 15 to 19 years old, they're up 70 percent, compared to the first decade of this century. The preteen girls, who have very low rates to begin with, they are up 151 percent. And that pattern points to social media.<sup>10</sup>

I highly recommend that you watch *The Social Dilemma* at least twice.

I have done my best to describe why it can be difficult and frustrating to get help for digital addiction from the professional community in many countries, especially the US. Even in countries that recognize digital addiction, I have not found uniform therapy methods. I have read from therapists who see success in treating patients with limited guidance. The good news is that I have found information that will undoubtedly prove helpful. I want you to be very encouraged that success is more than possible.

While I appreciate and support the doctors, counselors, psychologists, etc., who are working on the digital addiction dilemma, my trust is primarily in the Lord. He is the One Who ultimately leads us into freedom and healing.

*Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." Matthew 19:26 (NIV)*

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<sup>1</sup> "DSM-5: Frequently Asked Questions." DSM-5 FAQ. American Psychiatric Association. Accessed March 9, 2022. <https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice/dsm/feedback-and-questions/frequently-asked-questions>

<sup>2</sup> Sarkis, Stephanie A. "Internet Gaming Disorder in DSM-5 | Psychology Today." Internet Gaming Disorder in DSM-5. Psychology Today, July 18, 2014. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/here-there-and-everywhere/201407/internet-gaming-disorder-in-dsm-5>.

<sup>3</sup> "Internet Gaming." Internet gaming. American Psychiatric Association. Accessed March 9, 2022. <https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/internet-gaming>.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Booth, Barbara. "Internet Addiction Is Sweeping America, Affecting Millions." CNBC. CNBC, August 29, 2017. <https://www.cnbc.com/2017/08/29/us-addresses-internet-addiction-with-funded-research.html>.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>7</sup> Snider, Mike. "Video Game Addiction Is Officially Considered a Mental Disorder, Who Says." USA Today. Gannett Satellite Information Network, August 8, 2019. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/tech/news/2019/05/28/who-officially-classifies-video-game-addiction-mental-disorder/1256352001/>.

<sup>8</sup> "Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM–5)." Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM–5). American Psychiatric Association. Accessed March 9, 2022. <https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice/dsm>.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> The Social Dilemma. Watch The Social Dilemma | Netflix Official Site, 2020. <https://www.netflix.com/title/81254224>.

Director: Jeff Orlowski Cast: Skyler Gisondo, Kara Hayward, Vincent Kartheiser  
Writers: Vickie Curtis, Davis Coombe, Jeff Orlowski Electronically published: 09 September 2020 Date Accessed: 09 March 2022

## **Dopamine Detox Part 4 - Plan Ahead** **by Brad Huddleston**

Because a dopamine detox can last a minimum of 3 weeks and as long as six weeks, you must plan ahead. Following is a list of suggestions:

- Probably the easiest way to plan a detox is when you are already on vacation. And, if you have days off stored up, it would be well worth your effort to ask your employer if you can add those days to your vacation. And, even if you have to add unpaid days to your time off, I know God will honor your sacrifice.
- Most people have time off during Holidays. At this point, you might be thinking, “I don’t want to ruin my holidays with a dopamine detox!” If that thought crossed your mind, you might want to rethink that. After just a few days of going without technology, many people report that they feel less stressed, more focused, and sleep better. You might find that you enjoy the holidays more than you have in years.
- If you are in desperate need of a break from technology due to burnout, it would be a good idea first to pray and then talk to your employer about your need for some extended “mental health days.” I suggest that you be upfront that you want to do a digital detox. The worst thing that could happen is that your employer says, “no.” But, on the other hand, you might find that your employer is in total agreement and will admit that they need a technology break as well.

As previously mentioned, Dr. Victoria Dunckley offers the following advice for planning:

For the electronic fast, it’s very important to plan ahead: pick the soonest start date you can, and then structure your child’s time to minimize or eliminate downtime that would typically be filled with screen activities. I suggest getting a monthly wall calendar, writing everything on it, and posting it where everyone can see it, such as on the refrigerator. Any type of monthly calendar will do, but it might be worth buying a magnetized, one-month, dry-erase calendar at an office supply store.<sup>1</sup>

Like me, Dr. Dunckley also recommends taking advantage of holiday and vacation time for a family detox. Still, she adds the following qualifier:

That said, if you know of a trip or event coming up that you can't control — such as a vacation with cousins or friends where you know there will be lots of gaming — wait to start the fast until after it's blown over. Then, set a firm start date and start preparing.<sup>2</sup>

To expand on Dr. Dunckley's advice of structuring your child's time, I also strongly suggest that you structure yours as well. Parents are often struggling with digital addiction the same as their children.

After hearing me speak, I occasionally receive news of young people who have chosen to give up their technology. My ears are filled with angelic singing when that happens. Most of the time, children will not want to give up their technology, and anger will result. To help you prepare your children for what lies ahead, I want to repeat the recommendation I made in Chapter 1:

After explaining what a digital detox is, I recommend you begin by apologizing to your children. A conversation could go something like, "Sweetheart, mommy, and daddy love you very much. We have two apologies we need to make to you. The first one is that you have seen us on our phones and computers a lot and sometimes we don't give you all of our attention when you need it. We are not always good examples to you, and we apologize. Second, we have given you tablets, video games, phones, and televisions. Now, we're going to have to take them away so that our brains can feel better. Because we purchased these devices for you and now we're taking them back, we apologize. We realize this might confuse you, but in time, you will understand."

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<sup>1</sup> Dunckley, Victoria L. Essay. In *Reset Your Child's Brain: A FOUR-WEEK Plan to End Meltdowns, Raise Grades, and Boost Social Skills by Reversing the Effects of Electronic Screen-Time*, 139. Novato: New World Library, 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.



## **Dopamine Detox Part 4 - Replace, Replace, Replace** by Brad Huddleston

During a presentation to a large group of students in Australia, I made a case for a dopamine detox during their upcoming break, which, as I recall, was to last three weeks. During the question and answer session, I'll never forget one female student's question. It went something like this: "Okay, I'm in. I want to do a digital detox during our school break. My question is, what am I supposed to do for three weeks?"

If you have a pre-internet brain, you might be astonished by her question. You might be thinking, "I can think of a million things to do!" That's not always the case with a generation raised on constant technology. A growing body of research suggests that being raised on digital devices stunts creativity, and I believe it. I see it everywhere.

I've often thought I might write a book on non-digital activities for students who can't imagine living in a world without screens. In other words, I'm going to have to be their source of creativity because many students struggle to think outside of the box.

Nancy Carlsson-Paige is Professor Emerita at Lesley University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where she was a teacher educator in child development for over 30 years<sup>1</sup> (she is also Matt Damon's mom). In a *Washington Post* article about technology's prevalence in the lives of children instead of non-digital play, she writes:

Researchers who have tracked children's creativity for 50 years are seeing a significant decrease in creativity among children for the first time, especially younger children from kindergarten through sixth grade. This decline in creativity is thought to be due at least in part to the decline of play.<sup>2</sup>

During a tech fast, it is necessary to constantly distract oneself. In other words, instead of technology being the constant distraction, we need to find non-digital replacements. To explain the reason, I refer back to the video game addiction treatment center opened by the South Korean government. When the boys enter the program, all digital devices are confiscated, "And to alleviate withdrawal, the boys are kept constantly busy and active. Exercise is part of the therapy...after a bit of a runaround, the center uses old-school analog fun to keep the boys distracted. The counselors want the boys to find new passions, hobbies that they can take home and use when they feel the urge to go online."<sup>3</sup>

It really doesn't matter which replacements a person chooses to alleviate withdrawal during the detox so long as the activities have nothing to do with technology, including

television. The important ones to include are exercise, reading (from non-digital sources), and proper sleep, each of which I will cover in detail in a later chapter. Of course, the most essential non-digital replacements are spiritual ones.

My friend and fellow author and minister, David Lee Martin, in his excellent book, *UNPLUG: Switch Off Distraction & Hear the Still Small Voice of God*, gives outstanding advice regarding disentangling oneself from the digital world:

I believe that the directive to seek first God's Kingdom in Matthew 6:33 is a present promise inviting you into a remarkable life of miracles and abundance.

*Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. (Matthew 6:31–34 KJV)*

Disentanglement from one kingdom does not happen in isolation from entwinement with another. It is not enough just to switch off, we have to actively pursue something (or Someone) else. We'll either be attached to the Word, or choked by the world. There's no politically correct tightrope or balancing act between the two.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Nancy's Bio." DEY: Defending the Early Years, June 25, 2020. <https://dey.org/nancys-bio/>.

<sup>2</sup> Strauss, Valerie. "Beware the Quick Tech Fix When...." The Washington Post. WP Company, September 13, 2012. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/post/is-technology-sapping-childrens-creativity/2012/09/12/10c63c7e-fced-11e1-a31e-804fccb658f9\\_blog.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/post/is-technology-sapping-childrens-creativity/2012/09/12/10c63c7e-fced-11e1-a31e-804fccb658f9_blog.html).

<sup>3</sup> Rehab for Korea's Gaming Addicts. YouTube. Special Broadcasting Service (SBS), 2016. <https://youtu.be/uOm5aXXjzZM>.

<sup>4</sup> You can learn more about David at [www.davidleemartin.com](http://www.davidleemartin.com) and, you can find his books at [https://www.amazon.com/David-Lee-Martin/e/B00BBXV7KC?ref=sr\\_ntt\\_srch\\_lnk\\_2&qid=1647106532&sr=8-2](https://www.amazon.com/David-Lee-Martin/e/B00BBXV7KC?ref=sr_ntt_srch_lnk_2&qid=1647106532&sr=8-2)

Dopamine Detox – Part 6: Cold Turkey vs. Weaning  
by Brad Huddleston

Most digital detox programs advocate the cold turkey method instead of gradually backing someone down from tech use. Regardless of which method you choose, the more challenging part of the process will be maintaining what you've accomplished. More on that in future articles.

I've quoted from both Dr. Nicholas Kardaras and Dr. Victoria Dunckley because I respect them both immensely. Dr. Kardaras favors weaning patients from digital drugs:

The one difference that I have with the way that "digital detoxes" or tech fasts are currently done—both by Dr. Dunckley and at tech addiction rehab facilities like reSTART—is the cold turkey approach. As an addictions expert who runs one of the most respected rehabs in the country, I think we need to borrow what we've learned from the drug addiction treatment community. That is, when we do a drug detox, we no longer make the addict go cold turkey; that's when we get explosive and aggressive episodes—as we've seen with some of the kids I've described who have been unplugged abruptly.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Kardaras believes that weaning is more humane than in "the barbaric old days" of drug and alcohol treatment, where the alcoholic would be thrown into a dry-out tank or an asylum.<sup>2</sup> Regarding tech addiction, he goes on to say:

Similarly, when doing a "digital detox," we should slowly taper the young person down: for example, five hours of screen time should be tapered down by one hour per day. Thus, gradually over a roughly week-long period, the child is weaned off screens. However, during this time it's critically important that alternate healthy activities be substituted. You don't just cut back the screens and have the kids sitting in their rooms twiddling their thumbs. You take them to the park, or give them creative projects to work on. Things like that.<sup>3</sup>

I think the more critical issue here is that Dr. Kardaras, a well-respected expert in addiction and detox, equates digital addiction with traditional alcohol and drug addiction. In other words, addiction to technology is not less serious, and detox must happen, regardless of which method you find helpful.

In the vast majority of cases, I favor the cold turkey method. In my opinion, unless you can find and afford to check into a detox center where staff can carefully control the weaning process, the pressure to use technology will be too powerful to handle. My experience tells me that most readers won't be able to wean, as it is just too hard. Therefore, I feel it would be better to carefully plan a cold turkey detox, pray fervently, and go for it. If you are disciplined enough to carefully track and maintain a weaning schedule, then go for it.

Regarding going cold turkey, some detox facilities also favor cutting off technology at the beginning of the detox. I again refer back the South Korean detox center I referenced earlier where, "Teenagers come for a month at a time, and "all devices are confiscated upon arrival. The boys will go from full-time gaming to zero screen time."<sup>4</sup>

I also favor the reasoning that someone cannot get over drug addiction while taking the drug. To illustrate what I mean, the online publication Additude: Inside the ADHD mind ran the headline My Son's Story of Electronics Addiction and Recovery. The article goes on to say:

"If your child were addicted to drugs or alcohol, would you let him have just a little bit?" It was this question from Matthew's cognitive behavior therapist that started my head spinning. My child was addicted to video games, and I wasn't doing enough to help him recover. That is where the honesty — and the detox — began. Here is how we went cold turkey.<sup>5</sup>

If you are a parent who wants to pursue a family detox, I recommend that you read the entire article:  
[www.additudemag.com/video-game-addiction-digital-detox](http://www.additudemag.com/video-game-addiction-digital-detox)

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<sup>1</sup> Kardaras, Nicholas. "Introduction - The Trouble With Tech." Essay. In *Glow Kids: How Screen Addiction Is Hijacking Our Kids--and How to Break the Trance*, 121. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Rehab for Korea's Gaming Addicts. YouTube. Special Broadcasting Service (SBS), 2016.  
<https://youtu.be/uOm5aXXjzZM>.

<sup>5</sup> McNulty, Cynthia. "My Son's Story of Electronics Addiction and Recovery." *ADDitude Inside the ADHD mind*. ADDitude, January 21, 2022. <https://www.additudemag.com/video-game-addiction-digital-detox/>.

The Possibility of Threats of Self-Harm, Suicide, and Violence  
Digital Detox Series – Part 7  
by Brad Huddleston

It has been my experience that most of those addicted to social media have no intention of giving up the habit. Those addicted to porn rarely disagree with my seminar and admonition to repent. They acknowledge the harm it is causing and want to detox, but the bondage runs extremely deep, and they can rarely break the hold. It's the video gamers that concern me the most. More specifically, I'm troubled by the deep anger I often see in them when my seminar confronts their addiction. On rare occasions, I meet gamers who acknowledge that the addiction is causing damage and want freedom. Most, however, angrily display their opposition to stopping. Although addiction to social media, pornography, and video gaming are causing similar damage as traditional drugs, there is no cultural stigma with digital drugs. Schools, the workplace, friends, the church, and culture all endorse the "always-on" lifestyle.

I'm not writing this to scare you, especially if you're a parent and know that your child is not going to react very well to a detox. Knowing that your child might exhibit extreme and unacceptable behavior is more reason to follow through with your detox plan. The longer you let the problem go, the worse it will get.

Let's first deal with what could be your greatest fear. If your child threatens suicide for any reason whatsoever, settle in your mind right now that you will do whatever it takes to help them. You might have to call emergency services, drive them to the hospital, contact your pastor, call your friends in a panic and seek their immediate help. There is absolutely no shame in doing what you have to do to keep your child from harming themselves. Ask yourself this question: Would you shame your friends if they called you in a panic? You most likely thought to yourself, "Of course not! I wouldn't judge them. I would love and help them unconditionally." If your friends are true friends, they will feel the same about you.

I strongly recommend that you sit down with your spouse and formulate a plan if the worst-case scenario happens. Inform close friends in advance and let them know what you are about to undertake and ask for their prayers during your family tech fast. If you have a close enough relationship, ask if you can lean on them should someone in your family have severe withdrawals. Most importantly, lay a foundation of prayer and possibly fasting (from food) before undertaking the digital detox. Remember, you are not just going to be in a physical, emotional, and mental battle, but a spiritual one. Taking back the ground that satan has stolen will be a fight, but one we can win!

I have some hope and encouragement for you from Dr. Victoria Dunckley. Writing about her reset program, she says, "It may be reassuring to know that I've worked with children who have threatened to hurt themselves if screens are taken away, and I've seen children go through

some depression or anxiety during the initial stages of the fast, but I've never had a child commit an act of self-harm in relation to this program. In fact, children with a history of self-injurious behaviors tend to get better, not worse."1

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<sup>1</sup> Dunckley, Victoria L. Essay. In *Reset Your Child's Brain: A FOUR-WEEK Plan to End Meltdowns, Raise Grades, and Boost Social Skills by Reversing the Effects of Electronic Screen-Time*, 170-171. Novato: New World Library, 2015.