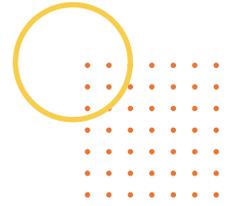


WITH AMY CROUCH & ANDY CROUCH

5 TIPS FOR A TECH-WISE SUMMER



MAKE MATERIAL MEMORIES

Our first impulse these days is to use our devices to capture moments we want to remember, and of course making a great photograph or video is a great use of a device. But these snapshots and videos quickly get lost in the stream of endless images in our lives and don't involve very much of our heart, soul, mind and strength. Decide that you'll make some of your memories in material form this summer. Grab some colored pencils and a journal and sketch something you saw. Pick a moment you're grateful for from the day and describe it in writing on an index card. Write a poem (it doesn't have to rhyme!) that captures a high or low of the day (more on that below). If you do any of these things once a day, or even once a week, at the end of the summer you'll have a collection of material memories of what was happening in you and around you.

PRACTICE AND PERFORM



Getting good at anything really worthwhile takes time. And during the summer, you may actually have time! Pick something you want to get better at this summer that requires heart, soul, mind and strength. It could be basketball free throws. It could be a dance routine. It could be a new piece or song on an instrument. It could be drawing human faces (or the faces of your pets!). Make a plan for how you'll practice and stick to it, for several weeks at least. Then, because all real accomplishment benefits from performance, make a plan to share your new skill with an audience of some sort. Set a date and time when you're going to do your best with your newly developed abilities—and then go for it. You probably won't do it perfectly, but you'll be better than you were at the beginning of the summer! (Practice and performance, in both athletics and the arts, are different from playing, which, while also very important, doesn't play the same skill-building role.)

FIND A RHYTHM

One of the gifts and dangers of summer is less structure. It is good when it helps us rest from overly scheduled and programmed lives. It's not so good when we find that we've spent the day scrolling alone because we didn't have any reason to stop. Two core principles of the tech-wise life are not letting our devices be always on and not using them aimlessly. We use them at certain times, and we use them for a reason. So make a plan for what times of the day you'll set your devices aside, and what you'll do instead. Maybe you'll plan, as Andy does, to go outside every morning before you look at a screen. Maybe you'll set a "time out" in the middle of the day, a two-hour block at a time when the weather is best, all the devices get turned off, and you get outdoors.

LEARN FROM YOUR DAY WITH "HIGHS, LOWS AND DID-WELLS"



Summer is a great time to embrace new experiences, whether a day camp you've never gone to before, staying up later than you ever did before or going somewhere new in your town or across the country. Some of these new things (a lot, we hope) will be really good—some will turn out to be difficult or disappointing. Either way, they aren't the usual routine. Which means that summer is a great time to practice reflecting as a family on what we're learning about how we thrive and grow. At a suitable time at the end of the day—maybe dinnertime or bedtime—you could use a simple exercise our family borrowed from another family to use in our weekly Zoom chats. Each person shares a "high" (a time you really enjoyed), a "low" (a moment of disappointment or sadness) and a "did-well" (a time when you rose to the occasion!). What do you notice about what parts of your life tend to be associated with highs, with lows and with doing something well? Think about how you could shape tomorrow, next week or even next summer in light of what you learned.

PLAN FOR BOREDOM

The best creative times of our lives happen on the far side of boredom. That means we have to plan to be bored—that is, we need to build in enough time free from distractions or easy fixes. We need to find ourselves not sure what to do with ourselves. On the other side of these "bored" moments, we'll discover all sorts of things to do . . . but only if we make up our minds ahead of time that we're willing to put up with that uncomfortable feeling that "there's nothing to do."

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