

Episode 12: Tech Less & Talk More to Promote Digital Wellness

Christy Keating 00:08

Hi friends and welcome to The Heartful Parent Podcast. I'm your host, Christy Keating. In this podcast, we talk about it all, our parenting, our partnering, and our professional lives, because they are all a part of us. And we were never meant to do this alone.

Christy Keating 00:40

Hey friends, welcome back to another episode of The Heartful Parent Podcast. Today we're talking to talk more tech less founder Dawn Wible. Dawn is an educator with a degree from Baylor University, and she has been working in the online safety field for 10 years. She is a certified digital Wellness Educator, and an alumna of the digital wellness Institute. She spends her time advocating for safe tech legislation, along with the screentime Action Network, to combat online harms to children. Dawn has trained over 10,000 students, and community members on healthy and safer screens, she also gets to live out healthy digital parenting in real time, as a mom of three amazing boys, I think you're really going to enjoy this conversation with Dawn, because she sort of boils down digital wellness and what it means. And then really the five aspects of it that we all need to be thinking about and talking with our kids. She digs into our physical wellness or mental health time and the health of our relationships and connection. And finally, ethics and safety. And in each one of those, Dawn gives great ideas for how we can think about it as parents and as adults, and how we can talk to our kids about it. And just bring more awareness in general to sort of the digital wellness environment that we are bringing our children up in, I really enjoyed talking to Dawn, you know, like all of these fabulous conversations that I get to have, I learned something. And so I am hopeful that you will learn something too. Enjoy.

Dawn, I'm so excited to have you here and to be digging into the topic of screens and digital wellness and all of those things because, you know, like you. That is something I hear a lot about from parents. So welcome. And thank you for being here.

Dawn Wible 02:49

Right. Thank you so much, Christy, for having me on.

Christy Keating 02:52

Let's start with the basics. When we say digital wellness, or when you say digital wellness, talk to me about what that means. And how is that impacting our parenting in this day and age because this wasn't a thing when I was a kid.



Dawn Wible 03:10

Exactly. Right. And that's really how we got started is we were hanging out with youth and seeing a shift that was happening in the landscape with smartphones coming into their hands. Once computers and everything became handhelds. It just changed our lives truly did. We it changed our work, it changed how we communicate. And the research is now showing that our phones are honest, 22 hours a day, they're near bias. And so that's pretty much the entire day. So digital wellness is really learning how to be healthy with our technology use. So what does that look like? We incorporate sleep health, taking time away to recharge our body while our phones recharge, we incorporate mental health and when we go to our phones, sometimes when we're stressed out, versus doing other things like getting outside and doing things like that to help us make healthier choices. So it's really learning how to be healthy on our screens. That's kind of the simplified answer for digital wellness.

Christy Keating 04:13

Well, I appreciate that answer. And the thing that really strikes me is, you know, for many of us, maybe all of us, this might start be starting to shift as we see digital natives becoming parents but you know, the certainly the parents of my generation and an a bit younger. We didn't have to think about these things. We weren't raised with it. Our parents didn't have to deal with it. And so we're kind of starting from scratch and thinking, how do we manage this because it feels like you know, in the last 15 years, it just has been this onslaught, right? Right. Now you mentioned a number of different things that you focus on in your work as a part of digital wellness. Are those I know you talk about five key As are those the five key areas that you just listed,

Dawn Wible 05:02

Those are two of them. Yes, and then our time, so our our physical health, our mental health, our time, as it relates to our phone how much time we're spending and what we're doing with our time. Our relationships is the fourth area, that's our relationships in real life IRL, as, as the kids like to say, IRL, and our relationships on screens. And then the fifth area is that we focus on his ethics and values. And we look at the two areas of how our technology is built ethically, or unethically and then the choices we're making on it, how we're using it ethically, or unethically. So we really dig into more of the online safety aspect when we get to the values and ethics part of the training.

Christy Keating 05:46

Okay. So I'd love to just dig into each of those five, just a little bit. Yeah, let's start with the first one. You know, when you are talking with parents or talking with kids, like what do you want them to know about? And it's sleep. Right. Is that?

Dawn Wible 06:03

Right. Well, that's just our physical health in general. Health is sleep health is a huge part of it when Okay, parents, teachers, all of that. Yeah,



Christy Keating 06:12

yeah. And I think that's the thing that a lot of his his parents worry the most about. But there's more to physical health and technology than than just sleep. So why don't you expand just a little bit on what is incorporated into that physical health pillar, for lack of a better word? Yeah. And what are the kinds of things that we as parents need to be thinking about?

Dawn Wible 06:33

Yeah, so the physical health aspect is for sure, sleep is a big one. We know that a lot of kids take melatonin. And a lot of adults take melatonin, melatonin sales like melatonin gummies, sales have gone up 500% Since smartphones came on the scene, so it really does impact that blue light emission on our phones. And us having our phones on us late at night really does affect our sleep. So we just talked about a simple step of half being off of screens one hour before bedtime, if that's possible, will help raise the melody, the natural melatonin levels in your body and help you sleep better help you fall asleep quicker and sleep better. That's one of the areas another area that we touch on is just our physical bodies, spine health, eye health, looking at what blue light filtering does to help us when we're on screens for a long period of time.

You know, during COVID, our kids were on screens to get through school, a lot of them and so they were having to do all of their work. And having breaks really does benefit your eye health to take breaks from screen. So we dig into some of that spine health and tech neck having our screens like my my laptop right now, as I've talked to you is elevated so that my head isn't facing down for a long period of the day, I bring up COVID A lot, because we were just we were really on our screens so much they they kind of saved us during that period, you know, we were able to connect with everybody and continue to work from home, so many of us, but I found myself sitting on the couch a lot with my laptop in my lap and my head was facing down. And when you're doing that for hours at a time, it really does affect your spine health. And so and then we just talked about we focus really on the outdoors, and how that impacts our physical health, how it impacts our bodies to move our bodies to be outdoors and breathe fresh air, it helps our immune systems, all of that. So that's some of the core areas we focus on when it comes to physical health.

Christy Keating 08:36

I love all of that. And I think the sleep is one that that I talked about. And I know a lot of parents think about, although they don't always know what to do about it, but the some of those other pieces and just being aware of the impact that this has on our the structure of our bodies, right. I think it's something that we think about far less and of course, I look at my kids, you know, ages 13 and almost six and I think they're so bendy, right? They are just so their bodies are so much more flexible than mine. At my age and and so I'm not sure that's something that a lot of us as parents stop and think about what is you know, because we may not see some of those things short term, right with right, bendy kids, but long term, it's having an impact on them.



Dawn Wible 09:28

Yes. And a lot of the we also focus on just body awareness and body cues how when I was growing up, we could pause Mario and go to the bathroom and now there's multiplayer games and if they leave around in the middle of the game, then their whole team loses and they're all mad at them and so even when they have to go to the bathroom listening to body cues is affected by overuse of technology or overuse of gaming sitting for a long period of time. Not realizing you're thirsty or hungry because our attention is fully engaged on what we're doing on that screen, and it's a normal thing that happens when we, when our brains are engaged with what's happening on the screen, we forget what's happening in our bodies. And so really paying attention and helping kids pay attention to those body cues important

Christy Keating 10:19

Well, I have to imagine that there's not very many parents listening to this that can't relate to that on some level. Yes. Right. I mean, maybe this is, you know, TMI oversharing. But I hate having to get up from my desk when I'm in the midst of something. Yes, to go to the bathroom. And that's so ridiculous. Like, I know, it's ridiculous in my head. Right. And yet, I find myself resisting that, you know, taking that break sometimes and so bothered by it. Right legs body? Convenience. Yes, I, you know, as an adult woman, who should want a break from work in struggling with that I can't even imagine, you know, a 15 year old boy in the midst of a multiplayer game. Yeah. Wanting to be like, hey, wait a minute, guys. I got it.

Dawn Wible 11:05

Right. Yes, exactly. So real impact there.

Christy Keating 11:09

So I just think there's some great space for awareness there. And I love that that's like one of the touch points of what you talk about.

Let's talk about touch point two, what tell us again, what touch point two is? And what are some things that parents need to think about with that one?

Dawn Wible 11:27

Yeah, so this one is mental health. And some of the first and second really overlap, because it's part of our you know, our minds and our bodies, a lot of the same things are affected when we're outdoors. We're spending time outdoors that's truly affecting our mental health, I again, bring up COVID, I remember when we were walking, we were going through COVID, we had a 5pm walk with our neighborhood, of course, we were socially distancing our friends and neighbors, as we were walking and either sipping, you know, late night wine or coffee or just taking an exercise walk.

But we looked forward to that five o'clock walk. And it was amazing what it did at three o'clock in the afternoon, when we were in the middle of all the news and hearing, what are we going to do next?



What, what are we supposed to do here? I just would think about, okay, well, pretty soon we're going to be outside. And we would get out there and look up at the trees and hear nature and see the birds still flying. And we would all just take a deep breath and go, Okay, we're, we're going to be okay. We are overwhelmed with news and social media and all of the things that were good and bad things that were coming up and happening during that time.

But to just pause and be in nature, it's amazing what it does to our mental health. So we focus a lot on stress and what we can do with our stress rather than going to our phones and numbing out which sometimes it's okay to hop on our social media and scroll, but if we realize why we're going to it, and what it's doing to us if we're staying on it for a long period of time. One of the main points that I talk about in my training, and Gretchen Rubin from the cap, that happiness campaign, coined this technology is a good servant, but a bad master. And it is so true if we can realize and every one of these areas that we talked about during the training, if we can set our technology as a tool where it's serving us and not mastering us, then we're going to have better digital health. We're going to flourish actually, if we can continue to make those decisions, but you're right, it's awareness, it's paying attention to these things and then making those small steps getting outside every day.

That's what we if there's an opportunity to get outside every day, we talked to high school students, go take your shoes off, go sit in the grass and do your homework even just that little step is gonna make you feel a little bit better just giving them little ideas on how to how to get out the outdoors and and really manage their stress rather than going straight to their phones when they want to get stressed out.

Christy Keating 14:05

Okay, I just have to go back for a second and say I love that you and your neighbors had like a wine walk at 5pm During COVID When it kind of needed it right? That just sounds so joyful. Especially during a time that was so stressful and and I think that would be great fun in my neighborhood too. But you know my husband and I take a walk almost every night. And it's typically later at night. It's like after the kids are in bed. We have three dogs we have a small zoo in our house and so we get them out for a walk even in the rain, which it does a lot of in the Seattle area. And it is such a nice way to end the day with that outside time.

Dawn Wible 14:46

Yeah, I love that that you do that in the evening.

Christy Keating 14:49

Yeah, it's just a lovely way to kind of wrap up and he and I can touch base and do all those things and nobody's on their phones and but getting the kids to do that is some times harder.

Dawn Wible 15:01

Yeah. So it is harder. And I always say, you know, it's really important for us to just invite, because a lot of times we want to force and I am so guilty of that, wanting to force things to happen, we are going to



have family dinner, we are going to go for a walk. But if you just continue to invite, then, and you continue to live it out, and you continue to see these healthy habits are happening in my own life, because we are modeling.

First and foremost, we're modeling, and our kids are seeing it and then they're going to mirror that. And so there are some nights when my husband and I all say, Hey, we're gonna go for our walk. And they'll say, man, and then a few minutes into the walk, we see them running behind us with their scooter or their rollerblades or their balls, because they'll bring their balls and kind of throw their balls around. And we're like, Oh, y'all couldn't stay away, could you? So they're, then there's some days, they don't, you know, they don't want to join us. And so just continue to keep that open. They're getting older to now. So I'm kind of like, learning this whole new stage of freedom. And yeah, and then with my kids good.

Christy Keating 16:11

Yes, I will say I Well, first of all, I love the idea of inviting and not forcing when I do that in my home. And I'm also guilty of forcing, I have to also guilty of it, especially with my team, because we're hitting that, you know, it's not as fun to hang out with mom and dad. Whereas my six year old, almost six year old loves, you know, she'll say yes, anytime. And if we let her. We don't invite her on our evening walks. But if we did, she would be all in, especially if you have to go to bed.

Dawn Wible

Exactly. Yes, yes, yes.

Christy Keating

Okay, so there's this huge overlap, obviously, between physical health and mental health. And I think that makes sense to a lot of parents. Because when we're taking care of our bodies, moving our bodies getting outside, we know we feel better emotionally. Yeah. And when we're outside, we're typically not sitting there on our phones, right? We're doing things, right. What is the third piece of this, you know, five piece framework?

Dawn Wible 17:11

So the third one, yeah, the third one is our time. And this is it. This is huge for us as digital immigrants, because before we knew what life was before the internet, before cellphones, our time was essentially our own. And it's not anymore, we are at the mercy of that notification that's coming in that text that's coming in. And you know, some people can be judgey about that and say, Well, we have to have that or we don't have to have that. And we just kind of try to align somewhere in the middle, where there's wisdom of this is just how life is now. And it's a big part of our work. It's a big part of our communication, especially if you have old, older kids that are driving and you're trying to get a hold of them, it would be great to be like, Oh, we don't ever need phones anymore. And our time is our own.

But that's just not how our world is right now. And so really trying to make good decisions. And one of the biggest things that we tell students especially, is to limit notifications, because the more notifications



and this actually overlaps into mental health as well, because of the anxiety that comes up as our notifications are coming on. So I'll ask students, what's the first thing that your app asks you and you download it on your phone, and they all they all say Allow notifications or allow alerts. And I'll always tell them it, go ahead and push don't allow right now. And then if you need if that's an important app, and you really want it to you want to get notifications from it, go back into your settings and set them up. But don't hit allow for every app that you download, especially kids downloading lots of games or different things like that. Because the more notifications that come in the less time that that time is not your own anymore. Your eyes are constantly looking at your phone. And there's great software and companies and apps that have developed been developed to help with this. The freedom app is a great one. A lot of writers use that to be able to dig into their deeper work and not have the is shallow at work that's distracted and interrupted by our technology.

And so yeah, we just we just talk about the different areas of time. When I talk to parents talk more about work. When I talk to students, I'm talking more about their schoolwork and different things that they can block so that they can not be distracted and multitasking and we lose 23 minutes of focus when we are distracted. It takes us 23 minutes to get back to that deep focus that we were on before our calendar alert went off or whatever it is. So wow, that's a lot of time.

Christy Keating 19:57

That is a lot of time and that's a stat that I have not heard before, but is really, I'm sitting here going, oh my goodness, the number of times I get distracted. You know, I picked up my phone while you and I were just talking because I wanted to see. And I generally think I'm fairly aware and I do hit No, I don't want those notifications. But in the time that we've been talking for the last, you know, 20 minutes or so, I have gotten at least three different notifications, maybe as many as six. Some of the notifications are actually reminding me that you and I were going to be chatting but yes. Right. So at least at least three sort of new novel notifications. And that's on a phone in a 20 minute period where I think I've turned off most of my notifications.

Dawn Wible 20:48

Yes. Astounding, right? Yes, yes. And you think about, you know, when kids are downloading Snapchat and the amount of I mean, they'll scroll through 100 that are on their screen before, you know, once they get out of one class. So really having them be selective, and us to just how selective can we be about backing off on notifications, it's a huge, it's a game changer for distraction. And then just knowing, okay, I'm going into a session of writing or a session of, you know, if a kid's working on an essay, let's turn on, do swipe up, turn on, do not disturb or whatever, we have an iPhone. So that's how ours works, whatever device you have, turn it on, and then really set it aside and, and get your work done a lot faster. You know, your homework is not going to take five hours, when you have all those distractions turned off, you'll be surprised it'll take about 20 minutes or 30 minutes, just hammer it out. And you'll have all that time back. So we really focus on a lot of a lot of that.



Christy Keating 21:54

I think that is such an important way that we can actually help our technology help us. Yeah, love thinking about it about that. And yeah, and as I'm thinking through this conversation, I think that's going to be the number one thing that I talk with my daughter about tonight. Yeah, my older daughter, my younger one does not have a phone, but my teenager does. And and I see it become a distraction. And she will say it is a distraction. And she's not on social media. But she can find many, many things to do on their regard. Yeah.

Dawn Wible 22:23

And kids that make that decision really do feel better. And we talk about that in the digital wellness world is you want to go into your technology, feeling good and come out of it feeling good. And there are steps you can take that will help you do that. And that is a huge one. Limiting notifications is a really big one.

Christy Keating 22:44

And love the thought you want to go into your technology feeling good. And you want to come out of it feeling good. Which too often we go in not feeling good, right? So we're using it as a numbing behavior, right? And or we see something online that is stressful, anxiety producing mean, upsetting, you know, or, or it adds something to our list of things to do. And so we don't come out feeling good. And I wonder what would a different experience it would be like each day if we thought I'm only going to get on this if I'm feeling good. And I'm only going to focus to the extent that I can control it. Yeah, on things that leave me feeling good as well. What an interesting sort of thing for all of us to think about. Okay, we've talked about physical health, we've talked about mental health. We've talked about time, what's number four?

Dawn Wible 23:35

Okay, so number four is relationships. And this is really where talk more tech, let's get started. It got started by hanging out with youth being involved in their lives connection, talking more leads to connection, talking more about all of the issues helps keep our kids safer online. And so yeah, the relationship aspect in the connection aspect is is really huge. And when you talk you know, we just mentioned feeling good coming out of our phones one of the areas we talk about when we're talking about on screen relationships is there's a lot of relationship research now coming out of these online relationships and so an online connections and so if we can, you know, I always say it's taken me a while to get my social media to a point where I do feel good coming out of my phone, I follow accounts that build me up I follow accounts that inspire me but everybody's feed is not the same and in my feed didn't look like that a long time ago.

And I had to kind of work on that and so being strategic with our online connections and with our talk to especially with all the research coming out with teenage girls, I talked to high school and junior high girls about when you first download and and even boys as well your first social media account and you are following all of these Celebrities, they may have, you know, for mansions and 17, sports cars and the women, you know, in the fashion industry, or they may have all of this, all of these dresses in



fashion, and you're following all these things and you're feeling a lot of FOMO. First of all, but you're also just feeling less than and, and your well being is truly affected by what's in front of your eyes and what you're taking in. And so following accounts, where you're, you're connected to the people that are in your life, because I always say there's, the people in your life are going to want to see what you're posting. So you want to still be active if you have a social media account. But if you're just taking in content all the time, you're actually going to, you're actually going to feel less it's going to affect your well being. Yeah, so that's an important aspect of those online connections is who are you following? Who are you interacting with.

And then of course, we go into talking about strangers, talking about people you don't know in real life and how you're not sure who they are. And I'll get into that more when we get into the last section. But that's an important aspect of how they're spending time online. And really keeping social media social. That's when it's when you're online and in real life. So you're following the accounts your kids are following. You guys are posting about their sporting event, grandparents are commenting on it, just different things like that. You're keeping social media, social, allows kids to have this healthy feeling when they're on social media. So they know when they're isolated, and on their own.

And weird things are starting to happen and mean things are starting to be said, they're going to notice this doesn't feel good, because they've been connected to what does feel good. And so modeling healthy and social social media is a way to do that. And I say all of that with of course there are, you know, there's so much that goes into how this stuff is built and how addictive it is. And so that's a really idealistic way of looking at it. But if you do, the families that I've worked with over the years that have their teenagers have the healthiest relationships with social media are very much that they are very active on it, in a sense that it's very public. And they're all involved in it,

Christy Keating 27:19

Which I love that idea; and you're right, we don't have total control, obviously, over the algorithm and what is shown to us, but it almost feels like the social aspect is being removed from social media in many ways. And so you're saying like families can get intentional about bringing that piece back to it? For sure. Yeah.

All right. Talk to me about number five, which I think you said is safety.

Dawn Wible 27:45

Yes, well, and I will just add a little bit onto the relationship, when we spend a lot of time on in person relationships, as well what connection looks like looking up making eye contact, 15 minutes of meaningful talk a day reduces the cycle of cyber bullying and a kid's life. And we know it also just interrupts other things that are going on in their life, it helps bring that connection. So that's a bowl of cereal in the morning with your kids before school, because a lot of times dinner, you know, we're at sporting events, or we're doing different things in the evening. Just being intentional about finding that 15 minutes of meaningful talk. And I even tell students, you know, hopefully you have someone in your



life that that you can open up your inner life to, because a lot of times we keep that to ourselves, and we don't open that up. But when we do, we're, we're neurologically being connected to people. So we want that in real life so that our kids aren't constantly seeking that somewhere else. Because they do want to be connected, they want to feel connected.

Christy Keating 28:47

So well. And we know I mean, the psychological research has definitively concluded that connection and relationship is one of our core human needs. Right? We cannot survive, we cannot survive well without it. And so I love that that's, you know, the focus on that, because it's not just about talking about the really, you know, you you mentioned talking about people that they don't know, online, and I know we'll talk about that more in the safety piece, but really thinking about where are those connections being made? And is it a meaningful connection? Or is it a like, you know, from, you know, here that whatever account it is getting really intentional about that both online and in person?

Dawn Wible 29:32

Yeah. And that does bring us into the last section because we talk about ethics and how our technology is designed unethically in ways it is truly, you know, the the software designers, the people that made social media have designed this for human needs and so that our deep need for connection is what brings us back and studying human psychology and ever anything to design these devices to so that we want to be on him as long as possible is a big part of it.

And so awareness around how are technologies built, whether that's watching the social dilemma documentary, or just seeing some of the research that's coming out about how are technologies designed is a really important awareness piece for people to pay attention to that because it helps us to say, Okay, if this is how it's designed, how can I use it to align with my values? What are my values, and really doing work around values work with your family is a great way to start that and so if you say, Okay, so our family, we really value adventure, we love adventure, you know, what does that look like? For this piece? We value honesty, we value truthfulness, you know, these are the things that we value, and how can we align that and so looking at our, how we use our technology in those ways can help those initial talks when your kids first get their their phone, on our website, we have what we call smartphone Ed.

And it's like a driver's ed course for kids first smartphones. And it's only a 30 minute video, but it goes into really having those conversations around, hey, this is your first phone that we're letting you use. And here's how we're going to line this up with what we value and what you value. And here's some things that are going to happen if you know you're not doing those values, using your phone in that way. And then going into how to tech responsibly, which is our hashtag tech responsibly, is really where we get into the choices we make on our phones.

And we talk about digital footprint and how what we think is between us and this screen is not really just between us and the screen that privacy is a myth, when it comes to that that snap doesn't disappear.



The software companies, you know, have that person that screenshotted it, thankfully, Snapchat does report that if somebody screenshots it, but once it's gone, you know, once it's out there, it's out of your hands, and it, it feels so intimate and private, but it's not. And I can't tell you the amount of stares, I get people looking at each other. When I say that it's truly a foreign concept, even though we hear it a lot. And we feel like okay, everybody knows this, right? They really don't.

And when it comes to, I'm doing my first pre-K, that's three and four year old training screensaver training. This month, I've done kindergarten, I started at college age, gone down to kindergarten, but getting down into a public school with three and four year olds talking about course, in an age appropriate way talking about these things, and they really don't have any concept that what they see on these devices or do on these devices is public. It's it's not private. So

Christy Keating 33:01

I mean, I have to admit, that took my breath away a little bit, as I'm thinking about the need the fact that there's even a need to be talking to three and four year old children about ethics and safety and privacy and all of those things on the internet. And I can't stop but think. And look, I know, and especially during COVID, we needed those screens, oftentimes to help us just get through the day, you know, to as the electronic babysitter or you know, to be able to do our own jobs or just have a moment of sanity.

But I can't help but think like why why are we giving children that young devices that, you know, without really thinking through what the potential consequences of that are. I'm a big believer that we're all doing the best that we can with the right information that we have and the situation that we're in. And so I don't say that from a place of judgment. But I do say that from a place of I think we as parents need to develop a little more self awareness and a little more thoughtfulness sometimes about these things. Total sidenote, I know but

Dawn Wible 34:11

Yeah, no, it's great. It's so true. It's so true. Yeah.

Christy Keating 34:15

Which actually is a lovely segue into, you know, sort of, I don't want to say my final question, but one of my final questions, which is the modeling piece of all of this, and obviously we've as we've talked about these five aspects of, of digital wellness, you've talked about it from the parents standpoint, and the child's but what, what is the impact of modeling and how, like, how should parents really be thinking about that? Because we all know that our kids are watching what we do. Yeah. But it is so easy, especially when it comes to tech to say, Do as I say, not as I do.

Dawn Wible 34:54

Exactly, yeah, how do we fix that? It's so true. Well, it's hard these They have been handed to us, you know. And so you said a few minutes ago, you don't want to be judgmental, and it's so true, we absolutely really can't be judgmental of each other this, this has been handed to us as our cultural piece



of work and school and everything right now. I mean, our district got the one to one iPads, 10 years ago, we're 10 years into this, our kid's actively using these. So that is kindergarten classes, you know, that is five year olds having access to the internet. And so I think it's, there's a lot of pieces that go into it. I think, really being aware of holding tech companies accountable for some of the ways that they are offering these new software, parental controls, things like that can help us but the modeling piece is huge. I have a lot of parents that ask me, why don't you just tell us how to keep our kids safe online?

And why do you talk about the wellness aspect of it. And I tell them that if we're not well, we won't be safe. And if we're not safe, we can't be well, and so our kids have to learn what wellness looks like. And the best teacher is going to be our own life, our own modeling, are we sleeping with our phones on our pillows and waking up at three in the morning, checking things, they're gonna notice that and they're gonna want to do that, too. We have a detox box that we use at mealtimes. It was one of the things that started with our website. And we started doing these detox boxes where we plug in our phones and set them aside. And there's a lot of science that goes around having our phones away from us and what that does to our mental health and our relationships and connections. And so we have that for just our family mealtime. And if my husband has his phone out, or if I have my phone out to show a picture or something our kids will get onto this. Hey, you told us we're like, I know. I know. We're putting it up there. But yeah, yeah, that's a big one. That's a big one in our home is mealtime.

So I think really blocking time blocking, like making sure these are, these are specific times that we like you said, we go on our walk and we don't bring our phone or we have a mealtime and we don't have our phone now, or we're going to go to a restaurant, we're all going to leave our phones in the car and mom's purse or whatever. And we're actually going to just sit and have a meal together guys and not have our phones out. It kind of allows you to allows them to see that for you and and experience what that connection feels like. And then they're gonna eventually want that in their own lives, too. It's kind of that inviting, inviting thing.

Christy Keating 37:39

I love that. Yeah, just the idea that if our kids see us doing something positive, and that that's having a positive impact on us that they want that just as well, as you know, if they see us with our cell phone on our pillows at 3am, as you said,

Dawn Wible 37:54

Yeah, and that is going to ripple effect toward their safety, because they're not on their phones at three in the morning on websites that they wish they weren't on. Because they've learned this wellness piece, it helps them it helps keep them safe, actually, are they're not isolating with their phones, they're out in public, they're being social with the family. So

Christy Keating 38:17

I love that we have a very well, we have two pretty much never violated rules in our house. And the first one is my daughter's cell phone and her school laptop sleep in our bedroom. Right? They are not, they



are not where she is. Again, my little one. I know she uses computers, some at school, but they you know, she's not bringing one home. And then the second rule is that we do not have devices at the dinner table. The only exception to that? Well, I should say there's two exceptions. The first is we have an au pair who is predominantly Spanish speaking. And so we allow her to use her phone when she needs to translate something yes into English and doesn't know the word, which feels like a legitimate use of it. And then when we have our family meetings, we talked about the schedule, and we'll pull out our phones for that because our calendars are on the on the phone. But other than that we don't have our phones at the dinner table. And it really does leave space for connection which is I really enjoy. I hope my kids enjoy.

Dawn Wible 39:21

Yes. And if they don't now what it's doing is there, it's connecting them and so they will eventually feel it, when that's not happening at all in their lives, whether it's with their friends or different things like that, you know, and then hopefully they'll be that inviter to others and it'll ripple out from from your table.

Christy Keating 39:42

I love that idea. You know, the invitation that we do at our at home can then ripple into the to the larger world. Dawn, I know we could talk for a long time. But I want to sort of end with one question for you because we talked a lot about digital wellness and how we can address that as parents In these five key areas, you know that the name of this podcast is the heartfelt parent podcast. When we think about the work that you do, and that word heartfelt, what does that word mean to you in terms of parenting and digital wellness?

Dawn Wible 40:14

Well, it really falls back on our name, talk more, I have three boys. And so I have to get creative about talking more with them. Because they're not, I have friends that have daughters, and they like to tell them everything. So I really, over the years have learned how to just be in touch with them where they're at in life and have curious and creative questions and conversations with them. And that opens up a doorway of connection for them, whether it has to do with their phones, whether it has to do with sports, friends, different things like that. And so really just being in tune with your own kids and your own heart and and connecting in that way through talking,

Christy Keating 41:01

Oh, I love that definition of, of heartfelt is showing up in a hurtful way. And being a heartfelt parent. Don, thank you so much for this conversation and sharing your wisdom and, and the way that you approach this with both parents and kids. I know that people are gonna get a lot out of it, because I got a lot out of it. So thank you for being here.

Dawn Wible 41:21

Thank you so much for having me. Again, Christy. It's always a pleasure to talk with you.



Christy Keating 41:25

Oh, you as well, you as well. What is the best way for people to find you and to connect with you?
Yeah, so

Dawn Wible 41:32

I think we're most active on Instagram, Talk More, Tech Less, and then talk more tech less dot com On our website, you can sign up for our newsletter, which doesn't, it just comes out periodically. And then we also have links to our Smartphone-Ed and other really cool swag. We've got some fun T-shirts in our detox boxes around there just for awareness.

Christy Keating 41:56

So fantastic. Well, I'll make sure that's also in the show notes. So people know right where to find you. And I hope they will connect, because you're doing great work in the world. Thank you, Don, thank you. Thank you so much.

Oh, my goodness, I hope that you got as much out of that conversation as I did. And that maybe it gave you a new framework for how you think about screens in your family and this idea of digital wellness and the five, touchstones if you will, of how Dawn talks about and thinks about digital wellness. I hope you'll track her down on Instagram and on her website because she's got lots of great content out there.

Friends, I have a favor to ask of you. If you are listening to this podcast, and you have gotten anything of value out of this episode or any other episode, which I hope you have. Will you do one favor for me? Will you forward information about this podcast to just one friend. More if you want, but at least one friend. Let them know that this podcast is out there that we're talking about our personal lives, our partnering our parenting, our professional lives, all of it. Will you forward it to one person and let them know. I'd be so so grateful.

Till next time. Have a great week. I'll see you.

