



GOOD

ON PURPOSE

LIVING FULLY IN A
DIGITALLY DISTRACTING WORLD

JENNY PHILLIPS & PATCH CROWE



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. GOOD ON PURPOSE	1
2. DOPAMINE-DRIVEN DESIGN	16
3. OPTING FOR A FULLER LIFE.....	35
4. THE EROSION OF DEVOTION.....	71
5. CULTIVATING TRUE CONNECTIONS.....	91
6. TRUTHS AND LIES ABOUT LEISURE.....	111
7. ESCAPISM AND RECREATION.....	126
8. DISCONNECT	137
9. HABITUATION.....	144
10. THE SHAPING OF THE SOUL	160
11. MAKE GOODNESS GO VIRAL	176
30-DAY MEDIA RESET.....	200
PERSONAL MEDIA PLAN	205

CHAPTER 1

GOOD ON PURPOSE

Over a period of years, Kacharakanahalli Lake in India was neglected and polluted with sewage and construction debris. As the years progressed, the lake became overrun with invasive weeds and silt, and the water carried a foul stench. Eventually, the lake turned into a dry stretch of land that functioned as an informal garbage dump. In fact, most people who had grown up in the area had no memories of seeing water there.

But some people *did* remember that there had once been a beautiful lake on that garbage-filled, foul-smelling, lifeless spot. A few of them were determined that the beauty that had once existed there could be brought back with intentional effort.

After years of planned cleanup, hard work, and engineering efforts, the lake has been restored—and the area is still improving. Paths and fencing are being built around the lake, and plans to depollute the water with trash barriers and aerators are in discussion. Slowly but surely, life is returning to Kacharakanahalli Lake.

This beautiful real-life story is symbolic of the beautiful real-life opportunity we have to choose. How will we tend to our souls and minds? What will we build our lives to be?

So much of the world has allowed time-wasting and soul-damaging content to slowly change the direction and potential of life. Just as the people living around Kacharakanahalli decided to remove the invasive weeds, the silt, and the debris and restore something lifeless to something beautiful, we can intentionally shape our lives in ways that allow us to be continually nourished by the life-giving waters offered by Jesus Christ.

We live in an incredible world, full of beauty, richness, and possibilities. God has given us so many opportunities to grow and progress, to do good and serve others, to experience and learn, and to feel wonder and joy. So much goodness is readily available for us to embrace, experience, and share—and much of that availability has to do with advancements in technology.

The blessings found in our modern world are quite extensive. Technology opens doors of learning, gives us access to books and knowledge, allows us to be immersed in uplifting music, and shows us wonders of nature that we wouldn't normally encounter in our daily lives. With technology at our fingertips, we have more opportunities to explore cultures and places, to create, to learn new skills, and to serve others. When used wisely, technology becomes a powerful tool to help us live a fuller, more meaningful life.

However, while technology has the power to build and bless, it also has the power to diminish and destroy. We see this truth reflected in the sobering trends surrounding these topics:

- The increasing number of times the average person checks their phone each day¹
- The percentage of people reporting anxiety, depression, sleep problems, and chronic stress²

- The decreasing percentage of Americans who read scripture and pray regularly³
- The decline in the amount of time families and friends spend talking face-to-face⁴
- The increase in poor physical health and obesity rates⁵
- The growing percentage of people who say they feel lonely⁶
- The decreasing amount of time people spend reading books⁷
- The shocking number of hours children spend on screens each day, and the decline in their play, creativity, imagination, health, and happiness⁸
- The rising flood of sexual content, profanity, graphic violence, objectification of women, and sensual messages in all forms of media⁹
- The average number of hours (yes, *hours*) a person spends on social media each day¹⁰

Statistics around these topics can start to make the digital landscape feel bleak and overwhelming, but here is the wonderful truth: We can choose how we use the tools of technology, and if our choices start interfering with the things that matter most to us, we can quickly correct course and change how we use technology to work with our values—not against them.

Technology only has the power over us that we give it. It cannot harm us more than we allow it to. We can develop the capacity

and ability to turn away from technology anytime we choose. We can learn to walk away from it when needed. We can program it to serve us. We can give it rules and boundaries. Technology is here for one purpose: to help us live a fuller life. *When we master technology, we do not let it master us.*

When you think of living a life of fullness, what words come to mind? Maybe you think of peace, abundance, purpose, light, joy, service, connection, hope, beauty, growth, or strength. We were created for these things. Technology—and learning how to limit and manage technology in the right ways—can help bring these ideals more fully into our lives.

Thus, we don't need to look at phones or computers merely with distress or negativity. What if we started viewing our devices not as constant troublemakers we are tethered to but as tools we can use to better our lives?

Imagine telling your phone something like this:

- “You can sleep for a while on the counter; I’m going to have an uninterrupted conversation with my spouse.”
- “You’re a helpful resource, but you’re not important enough to be the first thing I connect with in the morning.”
- “Hey, thanks for the peaceful music and the sermons you helped me access today.”
- “You can take a rest for a few hours; I’m at a family reunion.”
- “Stay away for a while. I’m upset and I want to handle conflict in a healthy way. I don’t need you for that. I need to go on a walk without you.”

- “Thanks so much for the recipe!”
- “No, you don’t get to steal my attention right now.”
- “Thank you for allowing me to connect with my loved one on a video call today. That was super meaningful.”

Do you feel the power and hope in these simple statements?

Are we suggesting that you actually start talking to your phone? Not necessarily, but if it helps you, then yes, go for it! What matters most is the mindset.

This book is filled with ideas to help you make technology work for the one precious life you have been given. We hope it will change your life by motivating you to become intentional with technology. We hope it helps you see technology differently—as something to respect and control, yes, but also as a blessing you don’t have to fear. Something you might just feel like saying “thank you” to. Seriously, “Wow, thank you!” But also, often stating a firm, “No, thank you. Goodbye.”

NOURISHMENT

It’s usually easy to tell when we are physically hungry. The symptoms are real and come on quickly. We also know exactly how to fix physical hunger: We eat something. But while symptoms of spiritual, mental, and social hunger are just as real (boredom, loneliness, sadness, restlessness), they are often harder to identify, understand, and treat.

“ Parasocial relationships refer to one-sided relationships in which a person develops a strong sense of connection, intimacy, or familiarity with someone they don’t know, most often celebrities or media personalities. These relationships exist only in the mind of the individual, who experiences a bond despite the lack of reciprocity.”¹¹

One of the biggest lies we must watch out for is that certain forms of media can help our symptoms. For example, if we are socially hungry, a parasocial relationship on social media can give us a *false* sense of connection. If we are feeling a loss of direction in our lives, watching YouTube or TikTok videos may distract us from that feeling, but only temporarily. The technology doesn’t address the issue or cause; it only masks the symptoms for a short time.

To live a truly full life, we need to keep ourselves nourished physically, spiritually, mentally, and socially. Doing so requires intentional evaluation and effort. It does not happen naturally. The more carefully and consistently we assess our health in these areas—and make deliberate improvements where needed—the more fullness we will find in life. But when we don’t give our nourishment much thought or care, technology happily steps in as a fake fix.

Too often, people go for years, or even decades, without realizing their minds and souls are undernourished. They get stuck in a cycle of masking symptoms of emptiness, restlessness, and unhappiness with the quick dopamine hits they get from social media, the news, and other forms of media. They don’t step back and ask, “*Why* do I feel restless and empty? What needs to change in my life so I can feel lasting peace and happiness?”

The truth is, technology can make us feel full while not actually filling us. We are living in a paradox of overconsumption and undernourishment. So many people are feeding themselves more and more—stuffing themselves full of content—yet their souls remain underfed. They find themselves weak, empty, and hungry for fulfillment but unable to break the very cycles that keep them from the richness of life.

Imagine eating five thousand calories a day, but it's all corn syrup and sugar. You would feel constantly stuffed, yet your body would be starved of nutrients and get sick. That is what is happening to so many of us today. We are constantly consuming material with a temporary fill factor but very little to no nutrition. As we try to fulfill our need for connection or purpose through a screen, we are, unsurprisingly, left craving connection more than ever. We aren't being satisfied by these "interactions."

And the truth is, so much of the media saturating our world is merely nutrient-lacking sugar—in other words, trivial, time-wasting, consumeristic content. Much of it has also become toxic, vain, divisive, immoral, profane, and violent. We have become deeply desensitized to it. What originally shocks us gradually starts to feel normal as repeated exposure dulls our emotional and moral alarm systems.

Over time, we stop recognizing how disturbing or mind-numbing the content truly is because our brains have adapted to treat it as ordinary rather than alarming. We take it in day after day (after all, everyone else does) without realizing that even as it promises to satiate our growing need for entertainment and thrill, it doesn't. Instead, it leaves our souls weaker, hungrier, angrier, more anxious, more tired, and further from the fullness we were created to experience.

Fullness “The state of abounding or being in great plenty; abundance.” —Noah Webster’s 1828 Dictionary

On the other hand, technology can be a wonderful tool to nourish our souls. Uplifting music, guided reflections, phone calls with friends and loved ones, exercise tutorials, and more can all be blessings.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE: PATCH

A few years ago, I reached an emotional breaking point. I couldn't sleep at night and felt unmotivated and anxious. Along with getting frustrated quickly, I started feeling less and less joy in the everyday tasks of life. Desperate for help, I went to see a holistic doctor. What she told me not only saved me, but it changed the way I viewed the world as well. It turns out I have a gene mutation that makes my body unable to break down the vitamins it needs to function normally. With this diagnosis in hand, I realized that my pain was just my body's way of communicating. It needed nourishment. Our spirits are the same. When we are constantly feeding noise to our souls, it's hard to diagnose why we are feeling so hollow. Too often we feed our souls with things they cannot process and use as nutrients. When we are fully consumed by divisiveness, self-absorption, sensuality, and the constant barrage of voices competing for our focus, it's easy to lose track of who we are and what we truly need. Unfortunately, that's what many media platforms and apps are designed to do.

So often, true nourishment requires that we put technology away and get out into nature, pray and read scripture, work in the yard, complete a home-repair project, reconnect with friends, prioritize interaction with family members, clean and organize our spaces, exercise, prepare healthy meals, sit in stillness, play an instrument, journal, work on hobbies, and engage in countless other activities that so easily get neglected because we spend our precious time scrolling and consuming content that does not nourish.

When a thousand invisible, calculated hands are reaching for your mind—your minutes and hours, your desires, your peace—you must reach even more deliberately for the things that truly nourish the soul. You must choose boundaries and habits that protect your soul. As you will see in this book, because the pull of technology misuse is so strong, you must seek boundaries with careful and tenacious effort. There is a very real battle being waged for your mind, your focus, and your beautiful God-given life. This book exists to help you be victorious.

CREATING A VISION FOR YOUR LIFE

If we do not clearly envision what we want our lives to look like, we will never arrive there. We have to choose a good life on purpose. “On purpose” means *intentionally*. And *intentional* is a beautiful word. It means to be deliberate, purposeful, planned. Its opposites—random, haphazard, accidental—portray life simply happening to us instead of being chosen and shaped by us. A life of goodness can only be attained if we seek it *on purpose, with purpose*.

When you begin making changes in your life to consume less media and create more available time in your days, it is vital that you have an intentional plan for how you want to use that time. An

upcoming chapter will help you form a plan specifically for media. We also recommend reading the book *Joyful on Purpose* by Jenny Phillips, which dives much deeper into intentional living in general.

A PLAN

Imagine a beautiful garden with watermelon vines spilling over low rock walls, climbing roses twirling up a natural-wood pergola, plump red tomatoes swaying from green vines, tidy walkways lining beds of bright blossoms, sweet peas curling up their trellises, and rows of feathery carrot tops waving above rich soil.

A garden like this does not grow by itself. It takes careful planning and effort. Each of us has been given a garden plot of life. What will we do with it? What will it become? It is, in truth, entirely up to us. All the tools are available: seeds, rocks, wood, gravel, water, sunshine, and shovels. But if we neglect the garden plot, the ground becomes barren or overrun with weeds. Perhaps it's even littered with garbage or infested by voles.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE: JENNY

When I grow my garden each year, I make a plan. I map out where to place companion flowers to attract beneficial insects, keep away damaging ones, and enhance the flavor of my vegetables. I look at notes from previous years to remember which plants thrive in certain areas. I research which varieties do well in shade or sunshine, which require deep boxes, and which thrive in shallow beds. And here's the wonderful part: It doesn't take much time. I sit down for about an hour to make a simple plan. A small amount of intentional planning goes a very long way.

Life can so easily pass us by without us ever fully experiencing the beauty and goodness we were meant to experience. Get ready to sit down and sketch out a plan. Get excited to create a vision for what you want your garden plot to become. Prepare to sink your hands into rich soil and plant seeds of goodness and beauty. This book and its companion guide will help you nourish the garden you’ve been given.

One last thing: We recommend that you plan your life in partnership with God. Rather than just getting up and trying to do the daily grind with our own strength, in our own way, and with our own intellect, we can allow God, the Designer of the universe, to help us design our day. It is our ordinary, precious days all bundled together that determine the very design of our life.

“ That the Lord thy God may shew us the way wherein we may walk, and the thing that we may do.” —Jeremiah 42:3 (KJV)

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE: JENNY

So much richness has been added to my life since I began a serious journey to live more intentionally many years ago. For example, just before writing this section today, I planted flower seeds and made fresh mint-rose water in my little greenhouse while gray clouds swirled in the sky outside. Then I sat by my fireplace for a Bible study that refreshed my soul. Years ago, none of this would have happened—I would have been answering emails on my phone right after waking up . . . I wouldn’t even have a greenhouse if I hadn’t been intentional about saving for it. Life can truly become so rich when we decide to make it that way.



COMPANION GUIDE

Complete Step 1, “Getting Started,” on page 2 of your companion guide. You will add more to the “Creating a Vision” section in upcoming chapters.

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MEET PATCH AND JENNY

The text in this book is a combined effort by Patch Crowe and Jenny Phillips. It aims to share the message and movement led by The Good and the Beautiful Media Department to “Make Goodness Go Viral” by choosing moral media, setting healthy boundaries on media, and using technology to flood the world with goodness. In addition to the collaborative main text, you will find personal experiences from both Patch and Jenny sprinkled throughout the book as they share their passion to live fully by intentionally choosing goodness.

MEET PATCH

Originally from Brisbane, Australia, Patch is a devoted husband and father, motivational speaker, and singer/songwriter with over 50 million streams. Armed with an MBA and a plethora of experience in the entertainment industry, Patch now works as a director for The Good and the Beautiful’s media department, where he helps strategize and implement the company’s mission.

MEET JENNY

As a wife and mother of five children, as well as the founder and CEO of The Good and the Beautiful, Jenny has worked with diligence to find richness and balance in her own life while sharing much-needed messages and inspiration with millions of people. Before entering the education industry, Jenny spent years touring the world through song and word, encouraging people to choose moral media and to make God a priority in their lives. Now, Jenny's efforts focus on the faith-based homeschool curriculum, books, music, and media that The Good and the Beautiful produces.

HOW THIS BOOK WORKS

- This book gives guidance for adults, not for teenagers or children. Just as you would not let a ten-year-old drive a car, we do not suggest that children use technology the same way adults do. See The Good and the Beautiful's book *Unconsumed Kids* to learn more about how to raise creative, compassionate, healthy children in this digital age.
- The *Good on Purpose Companion Guide* is designed to be used alongside this book. You can purchase the physical guide or download it for free on goodandbeautifulmedia.com. (Note: Not every chapter will have a correlated companion guide activity.)
- *Joyful on Purpose: Living an Intentionally Good and Beautiful Life* is a sister book to this book. While *Good on Purpose* focuses on our relationship with technology and how it can deeply impact our lives—both positively and negatively—*Joyful*

on Purpose explores principles about intentional, joyful living and practical ways to bring more richness and meaning into your life. However, lasting joy is often only fully possible once we have become de-habituated from technology and have set healthy boundaries around it. These two books are designed to go hand in hand, each strengthening and complementing the other. It is highly recommended that you read both.

- The last two sections of this book include our 30-Day Media Reset and guidance on creating a media plan. We strongly suggest completing the 30-Day Media Reset and then creating and following a media plan as a permanent part of your life. These sections can be completed at any time. You don't need to wait until you have finished the book to begin the 30-Day Media Reset.

“ It is not that we have a short time to live, but that we waste a lot of it . . . Life is long if you know how to use it.”

—Lucius Annaeus Seneca

DOPAMINE-DRIVEN DESIGN

The first step to becoming a person who controls technology instead of being controlled *by* it is understanding what causes its dependence-driving qualities. Being able to clearly see *what* is working against us and *how* it's doing so—naming something for what it is—gives us more power to combat it. Let's dive in and learn about the dopamine-driven cycle of media.

“Dopamine acts as the brain's reward chemical that is released during pleasurable experiences, working with the brain's reward system . . . Dopamine helps form associations between actions and rewards. This enhances motivation to repeat rewarding activities and form habits . . . Dopamine influences emotional responses and overall mood state, contributing to feelings of well-being. It works with other neurotransmitters for mood balance and impacts emotional processing and emotional learning.” —Olivia Guy-Evans, “Dopamine Function in the Brain,” *Simply Psychology* (2025)

God has given us a beautiful thing (when used in healthy ways) called a *dopamine system*. It helps us feel good when we serve someone. It brings us delight when we witness a beautiful sunset. It makes us feel happy when we connect with another person. It gives us satisfaction when we complete a hard task. Without this system, life would feel flat and purposeless. With it, we are inspired to work, to be curious, to love, to grow, and to live.

THE PROBLEM

When dopamine is repeatedly sought through high-stimulation inputs, it can become problematic. Technology use, such as texting frequently, scrolling social media, and watching short-form video content, creates an unhealthy dopamine cycle by repeatedly stimulating the brain's reward system in ways that mimic addictive behaviors. Did you know that simply *receiving* a notification can trigger a dopamine hit—even before you look at the message?⁴

It's just like Pavlov's dog experiment. When Pavlov rang a bell, the dog he was training began to salivate because it was conditioned to know what was coming—food. A similar phenomenon can be found in humans, especially once technology gets involved. When we receive a notification, the anticipation—the unknown of what that message might hold, the possibility of new information—makes us, in a sense, start salivating. We feel compelled to check. *What does it hold for us?* That tiny spark of excitement gives us a quick hit of dopamine. So we look. And we are rewarded—a like, a new post, a message, an engaging reel. As this process repeats, the neural link between a cue, like a notification, and its dopamine reward can become stronger until the action, like checking our phone, becomes an automatic, habitual response.⁵

Our brains were not designed for hundreds of powerful micro-rewards per hour as we watch highly stimulating movies, receive notifications from our devices, or scroll through digital content.

Many technologies are also designed to use *intermittent reinforcement*.⁶ When we don't know when a reward is coming, that uncertainty keeps us in a state of anticipation, much like using a slot machine. We might have a new notification when we check our phone. The next scroll might contain something very interesting.

We might have just created a post that will get more likes than the last one. We might have an email containing something important.

Movies with highly stimulating pacing and content can engage a similar mechanism. Viewers are conditioned to anticipate intense, high-arousal moments that might be around the next corner, such as shocking violence, sexually suggestive imagery, or graphic content, engaging the brain's reward-anticipation systems.⁷

When our dopamine receptors receive excessive stimulation from digital media, they become less sensitive, exacerbating this cycle.⁸ For starters, weakened receptors can make natural activities, which release gentler dopamine in comparison, feel flat and uninteresting.⁹ But the process doesn't end there. Data from a study on decreased reward sensitivity related to drug addiction suggests that even when addicts return to the same high-stimulation substances, their weakened receptors may need more and more stimulation over time to get the same dopamine hit.¹⁰ The same phenomenon can apply to high-stimulation media. What does this cycle lead to? We may find ourselves checking our emails, texts, and social media more often; scrolling longer and longer; seeking faster-paced or more stimulating content; and clicking through videos more quickly instead of watching them all the way through.

And the dopamine we do experience—it evaporates almost instantly, leaving us with heightened boredom and perhaps subtle feelings of loneliness, emptiness, grumpiness, confusion, or anxiety.¹¹ This experience leaves us feeling dissatisfied, and what do we do to feel good again? We turn back to technology, and the negative cycle strengthens.

THE COST OF CONSTANT STIMULATION

As this dopamine cycle progresses, people may find themselves consuming increasingly greater amounts of digital media, especially when a platform feels fun, seems harmless, and is widely used. That kind of media has a pull on us. It's so easy and so powerfully stimulating. The more we participate in it, the more we crave it, and the harder it is to leave it. And it can seem like most of the people we know are plugging along “just fine” while participating in all of this media.

However, research indicates that people who are constantly stimulated by digital media are not plugging along “just fine.” A 2022 systematic review of studies on excessive screen time in adolescents and children found that increased digital media exposure was significantly linked to many of the problems plaguing our society: poor sleep quality, obesity, depression, loneliness, lower cognitive function, and impaired social skills.¹² The review also found evidence that this relationship may be bidirectional: As these effects decrease quality of life, people seek relief by increasing their media consumption, which in turn further decreases their quality of life. We will continue to discuss this cycle of escaping problems through media in Chapter 8. While most research has historically focused on younger media users, emerging research on excessive screen use in adults is linked to similar negative outcomes.¹³

Just because our culture has normalized high consumption of overstimulating media doesn't mean it's the right path. Sometimes the right path is not the crowded one.

NOT ALL DOPAMINE IS THE SAME

So, is all dopamine bad? No! In fact, we actually really need healthy dopamine in our lives. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, dopamine can be a great tool that helps us flourish and feel truly good. Whether dopamine is healthy or not depends on what creates the dopamine release.

Dopamine does not create the same destructive cycle when it comes from healthy, effortful, real-world sources like spending time in nature, reading, interacting with people, creating, conversing deeply, and praying. Even ordinary routines and projects can place us in a healthy dopamine cycle: housecleaning, cooking, organizing, working in the yard, solving problems in the workplace, or making progress on a work project.

How is this kind of dopamine different? It's actually quite fascinating.

FAST, STIMULATING DOPAMINE VS. SLOW, NOURISHING DOPAMINE AND ITS GOOD CHEMICAL COMPANIONS

Meaningful, slower-paced activities engage the brain differently than do high-stimulation media.

These kinds of activities require effort, focus, patience, and sustained attention. They activate dopamine more slowly and steadily. Instead of sharp spikes followed by a crash, these activities produce a moderate, regulated dopamine response—one that does not dull the dopamine receptors.

But there is also another important factor that comes into play when we engage in meaningful, gentle activities. Alongside the

OPT FOR MEANINGFUL, REAL-LIFE THINGS

“ The paradox is that hedonism, the pursuit of pleasure for its own sake, leads to anhedonia—the inability to enjoy pleasure of any kind.” —Anna Lembke, *Dopamine Nation: Finding Balance in the Age of Indulgence* (2021)

Technology has brought many incredible and wonderful opportunities to us, but its overuse and misuse can strip from our lives the desire to participate in things that are deeply nourishing and joyful.

When we are using fast-paced media often—scrolling; watching short videos; receiving frequent notifications; listening to audiobooks at fast speeds; consuming video content with violent, fast-paced, or sensual images—we are conditioning our brains to expect frequent novelty and high stimulation. The brain then adjusts, requiring ever-increasing stimulation to hold our attention. This adjustment can have more of an impact on us than we may realize.

“ We [want] to be interrupted, because each interruption brings us a valuable piece of information. To turn off these alerts is to risk feeling out of touch, or even socially isolated.” —Nicholas Carr, *The Shallows* (2010)

HOW OVERSTIMULATION AFFECTS WHAT WE ENJOY

Overstimulation can greatly impact what things we enjoy and how much we enjoy them. For example, slower—but more important—activities such as praying, studying, reading, walking outside, and sitting in church can begin to feel dull and difficult. If things such as studying the Bible, reading books, attending church, and pondering in silence have started to feel harder to enjoy, some awareness of your technology habits may be warranted. An overstimulated brain may be preventing you from fully enjoying these things. Often people notice that as they reduce overstimulating media, they begin to enjoy real-life, meaningful, unhurried experiences more deeply.

Think about this: Two people could go on the same walk in the woods, and one person could enjoy it so much less than the other simply because that person has a life flooded with overstimulating technology and the other person does not. The person whose life is not flooded with overstimulating technology may possess a deeper ability to notice and appreciate the details, beauties, and wonders around them. They may possess a deeper capacity to feel joy from simple things.

Everyone, even those who participate in huge amounts of technology usage, can enjoy the blessings of experiences like spending time in nature. However, those who are tech-obsessed likely won't be able to feel them as deeply. Technology—certain types more than others—triggers frequent dopamine releases.¹⁴ When dopamine is continually spiked, the brain adjusts by becoming less responsive. As a result, ordinary pleasures—meaningful conversation, time in nature, reading, prayer—may no longer give us the same depth of joy. We begin to feel less because our capacity to feel has been reduced.

It's wonderful, however, that we can choose to change and heal our brains.

WHY MEANINGFUL, REAL-LIFE ACTIVITIES ARE IMPORTANT

Why is it important to engage in deeply engaging, real-life activities such as playing sports, reading, practicing hobbies, and creating art? How much does it matter? More time with real-life, meaningful activities restores and deepens our senses. Consider these far-reaching benefits:

- Our nervous system slows.
- Sleep quality improves.
- Anxiety and irritability are reduced.
- Mood and overall well-being improve.
- We are better able to regulate and process emotions.
- Critical thinking skills increase.
- Feelings of wonder, awe, and gratitude grow.
- Our sense of identity strengthens.
- Attention span and focus improve.
- We experience more fulfillment and joy.

- We rely less on constant entertainment to feel happy.
- We can regain the sensitivity we have lost.

How many of the things listed above would you want to have more of in your life? And what would you be willing to do to attain them?

“ Digital culture offers us new possibilities for talk and new possibilities for silence.” —Sherry Turkle, *Reclaiming Conversation* (2015)

DESIRE AND CHANGE

The hard truth is that slower-paced activities often will not appeal to us as much if we are caught in the addiction cycle of technology. And the deeper we are trapped in that cycle, the less interested we become in meaningful connection. It's difficult to pull ourselves out because the cycle itself diminishes our desire for what is truly good. And without desire, it's hard to change something as powerful and appealing as our use of stimulating technology.

In order to truly begin enjoying and desiring slow-paced activities, we must distance ourselves from fast-paced technology as much as we reasonably can. Over time, this step alone can change our lives. For example, if watching a movie every night sounds far more appealing than reading a biography or taking a walk in nature, that can change—not just the behavior, but the desire itself.

“ [T]he Net seizes our attention only to scatter it.” —Nicholas Carr, *The Shallows* (2010)

We shape our desires by what we feed our souls. The more we feed ourselves fast-paced entertainment, the more we will crave it. And the more we feed ourselves human connection, solitude, and meaningful experiences, the more we will begin to crave those instead.

Choosing slow-paced or uplifting, real-life ways to spend our time can be hard to do with the pull of immediately rewarding technology right in our pocket, but if the choice leads us toward a more full and joyful life, it's worth it.

OPT FOR MORE NATURE

“ I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately . . . and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived.” —Henry David Thoreau, *Walden* (1854)

When was the last time you stopped and watched the clouds or studied the fragile petals of a flower? When was the last time you put your hands in fresh soil or stood in the rain? When was the last time you took a walk simply to notice things such as the pattern of sunlight through the trees or the sound of leaves rustling in the wind? (Note that you can do all of these things even while living in an urban area.)

Have you ever closely observed the tiny veins of a leaf? Have you ever watched and listened to the bees on the flower bushes for several minutes? Have you ever rubbed fresh mint leaves between your fingers and breathed in their scent? Have you ever taken time to identify birds when you were on a trip? Have you ever taken note of which trees lose their leaves first in the fall?

Can you name plants and flowers common in your area? Can you point out which flowers attract which kinds of butterflies?

Most of us move through our days without truly seeing the world we live in. With heads bowed toward our devices, our ears filled with music, and our minds overstimulated and scattered, we pass by so much beauty without pausing to glory in the richness around us. Or, more likely, we are not even outside at all.

God designed us all with the capacity to be avid nature lovers. What we love and desire is not fixed. We grow in the direction of what we consistently notice and appreciate. If you think you are someone who would never actually pick up a leaf and study the light filtering through its tiny veins, you might be surprised by how your appreciation for nature can grow. There is wild wonder out there to be found by us all because humans were designed for connection with nature. The benefits from time in nature are well researched and documented:

- Improved mood, emotional regulation, and feelings of well-being¹⁵
- Expanded focus and memory¹⁶
- Lower chance of obesity¹⁷
- Increased creativity¹⁸

GOOD ON PURPOSE

LIVING FULLY IN A
DIGITALLY DISTRACTING WORLD

WRITTEN BY
JENNY PHILLIPS & PATCH CROWE

"We are living in a paradox of overconsumption and undernourishment."

"A beautiful life is never built by accident—it is created with vision and intention."

For so many of us, technology has taken root in our lives in a way that controls our time, drives our worst habits, and distracts us from the beauty and goodness around us.

You can take back control and create an intentional relationship with the world around you. This thought-provoking book includes well-researched insights into the effects of media on your mind, body, and soul, along with valuable tips and techniques for mastering the healthy use of technology and experiencing a full, rich life. *Good on Purpose* is a beacon of hope, helping you reclaim true abundance, joy, connection, and purpose in the one beautiful life we are given. Pair with the companion workbook—available for purchase in print or as a free download—to gain the most from this journey.



GOOD & BEAUTIFUL
· MEDIA ·



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COMPANION GUIDE

GOOD ON PURPOSE

LIVING FULLY IN A
DIGITALLY DISTRACTING WORLD

JENNY PHILLIPS & PATCH CROWE

GOOD ON PURPOSE

COMPANION GUIDE

This guide is designed for use with the book *Good on Purpose: Living Fully in a Digitally Distracting World* by Jenny Phillips and Patch Crowe. The guide is broken into three main parts:

1. **Creating a Vision.** In the book *Good on Purpose*, you will be directed to come to this guide to fill in the “Creating a Vision” sections. If you are using this guide without reading the book, you may fill out the sections at your own pace.
2. **30-Day Media Reset.** As you read the book, you are welcome to start the 30-Day Media Reset at any time, even before finishing the book. The reset is intended to be an intentional time away from as much media as possible to bring awareness and clarity and to start the processes of dehabitation from constant stimulation. As you complete your reset, daily check-ins provide opportunities for reflection about your journey.
3. **Personal Media Plan.** Follow the instructions to create a Personal Media Plan before your 30-Day Media Reset is over. The Personal Media Plan is designed to guide your media habits on a permanent basis. This plan allows you to purposefully and intentionally add media back into your life to the degree you choose and within the boundaries you choose.

Consider completing your 30-day reset and creating and following a media plan with a friend or with family members. Inviting others on this journey not only blesses them with opportunities to grow in discipline and joy, but also greatly increases your own chance of success.

CONTENTS

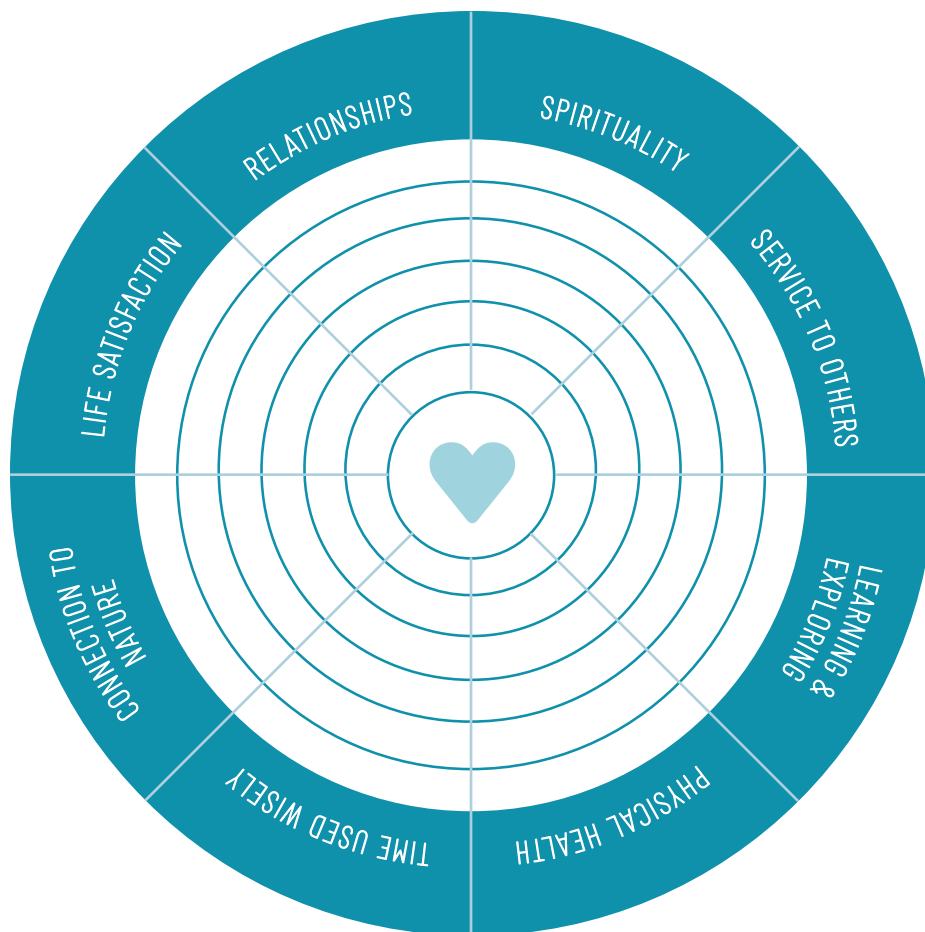
CREATING A VISION	2
THE GOOD AND THE BEAUTIFUL 30-DAY MEDIA RESET	6
DAILY CHECK-INS	15
THE GOOD AND THE BEAUTIFUL PERSONAL MEDIA PLAN	43
MY PERSONAL MEDIA PLAN	48

CREATING A VISION

1 | Getting Started

When we clearly envision what we want our lives to look like, we are able to live with purpose instead of simply letting life happen to us. A good and beautiful life does not grow by accident—it must be chosen, shaped, and cultivated. When you create a vision for your life, you can take control of your technology use, placing it in its proper role as a useful tool.

Beginning with the outer ring, place a dot in each section of the diagram to represent your current level of satisfaction in that area. Dots closer to the center indicate higher satisfaction. You will fill out this diagram again at the end of the guide to compare your progress.



“Where there is no vision, the people perish.” —Proverbs 29:18a (KJV)

“Technology is a useful servant but a dangerous master.” —Christian Lous Lange, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate (1921)

If you don't purposefully define your relationship with technology, there is a high likelihood that technology will define it for you by default. Declared goals are empowering.

Choose three of the adjectives below, or come up with your own, to define the relationship you want to have with technology.

controlled | healthy | mastered | purposeful | mindful | intentional | uplifting | wholesome | disciplined | edifying | minimal

I want my relationship with technology to be _____, _____, and _____.

Finish the phrases.

When I wake up each day, I want to feel _____
_____.
I want to be present in my life so I don't miss _____
_____.
I want people to know me as someone who _____
_____.

2 | A Healthy Brain and Connection to Nature

Choose two of the adjectives, or your own, to define the type of brain you want.

calm | focused | still | clear | present | healthy | strong | alive | refreshed | rested | unscattered | sound | unanxious | relaxed | regulated

I want my brain to be _____ and _____.

Fill in or check off the diamonds, marking the reasons you personally want to connect with nature (and, if desired, fill in your own at the bottom).

- ◇ Awaken awe, curiosity, and wonder
- ◇ Reduce stress and anxiety
- ◇ Restore attention, focus, and energy
- ◇ Deepen joy in beauty and simple things
- ◇ Improve vitamin D levels and circadian rhythms
- ◇ Draw my heart toward God
- ◇ Improve mood
- ◇ Avoid burnout and stay refreshed
- ◇ _____

THE GOOD AND THE BEAUTIFUL

30-DAY MEDIA RESET

► The Philosophy and the Why

While you do not need to read *Good on Purpose: Living Fully in a Digitally Distracting World* to complete this reset, it is highly recommended.

Although this reset may initially bring some feelings of boredom, anxiety, and restlessness, it will very soon start bringing a huge amount of awareness and positive change to your life. As you become less dependent on your devices, you will start to feel the world opening up to you in refreshing, enlightening, and empowering ways.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PUSHING THROUGH DISCOMFORT

To make a digital reset successful, it's vital that you follow the plan diligently and are willing to go through some initial discomfort, dullness, and change. When you're habituated to highly stimulating media, it can be hard at first to enjoy other things. Thus, working consistently at replacing time and space previously spent on your devices with intentional, rich, real-life activities and habits is crucial.

THE POSITIVE CHANGES YOU CAN EXPECT

Within a week or two, you will likely start feeling more relaxed, peaceful, creative, alive, and present. You may start seeing things in your life with more clarity and feeling with more depth.

THE POWER OF DOING THIS WITH OTHERS

If you can do the reset with another person, it will greatly increase your chances of success. Consider asking a friend or family member to participate with you, even if they don't live close to you. If desired, you could have regular check-ins and discussions with this person.

THE INCLUSION OF GENTLE, CLEAN MOVIES

This 30-day digital reset has the option to include four movies. A limited, once-a-week, gentle, clean movie can still allow the brain to dehabituate from highly stimulating media while building an appreciation for simple, wholesome entertainment and making the reset more sustainable. It is suggested you toggle on the "no profanity" option.

DAILY CHECK-INS

The daily check-ins provided in this book will enhance your experience and likelihood of reaching your goal. They are short and encouraging and will hold you accountable, allowing you to reflect on your experience.

NOT BEING PERFECT AT EVERYTHING

There are many action items in this plan, which means there will be no shortage of things to do during the reset. You're not expected to do all the

items consistently or completely. Changing habits and bringing more intentional activities into your life is a lifelong pursuit, and even if you do not get to everything, any of the good things you add in will begin to bless you.

However, it is highly recommended that you be very strict about keeping your boundaries with your devices, which is much easier to actually be consistent with. If you start making exceptions, the boundaries can quickly become blurred and weakened.

Q & A

Q: What about social events or other exceptions?

A: If you have social events or other exceptions where some aspects go against this reset and cannot reasonably be avoided, attend and participate without guilt. The goal is not isolation or perfection, but intentionality. Do your best to uphold the principles of the reset where you can, and then simply return to your plan afterward.

Q: Are audiobooks allowed?

A: Clean, uplifting audiobooks can be a wonderful resource. However, we suggest avoiding audiobooks during the reset (when reasonable) to help reduce constant stimulation and digital input so you can truly notice the difference it brings to your life. We highly recommend reading physical books during this reset.

TIPS

- Consider reading *Good on Purpose: Living Fully in a Digitally Distracting World* again during the reset period. This will keep you motivated and remind you of the important principles behind what you are doing. You could also read it aloud with a spouse or older children.
- Alternatively, or in addition, you could read *Joyful on Purpose: Living an Intentionally Good and Beautiful Life* during this time period. This book is packed with inspiration, encouragement, and ideas for living with more intention in ways that lead you to a joyful life. It's the perfect companion book to support you in filling your extra time with good things.
- Let your friends and family know what you are doing and why. Ask for their support.
- Don't skip the check-ins. They will help you stay on track and continually evaluate your plan and progress.

DAILY CHECK-INS

Each daily check-in has a brief beginning- and end-of-day section. Change is hard. Accountability and reflection are vital to the reset's success.

Day 1 ▶ Date: _____

MORNING

- ☐ Read/scan through your reset plan so it's fresh on your mind.
- ☐ Write down any goals or plans for the day.

EVENING

- ☐ Review your reset plan. Acknowledge what went well, and then jot down what you would like to strengthen or improve.

MORNING

- ☐ Read/scan through your reset plan so it's fresh on your mind.
- ☐ Write down any goals or plans for the day.

EVENING

- ☐ Review your reset plan. Acknowledge what went well, and then jot down what you would like to strengthen or improve.

- ☐ Read the following information.

You are likely to experience these feelings or thoughts:

- Boredom, agitation, loneliness, restlessness
- “Something is missing.”
- Impulses to reach for your phone without realizing it
- Mild anxiety or irritability
- “This is pointless.”

Here's what's actually happening: Your brain is used to fast dopamine, so it's asking, “Where did my stimulation go?” This is a sign that the reset is working.

THE GOOD AND THE BEAUTIFUL PERSONAL MEDIA PLAN

► The Philosophy and the Why

You were meant to live with creativity and wonder. You were meant to continually learn new things and grow. You were meant to be present and sensitive to the world around you. You were meant to feel alive and to live with discipline and attention. Hopefully, you have felt more of these things coming into your life after your 30-day reset. Now, to keep these things in your life and to continually increase them, it's critical that you make a written plan.

During a 30-day reset, clarity tends to return. You begin to notice what drains you, what overstimulates you, and what actually brings peace, depth, and joy. This is the ideal time to create a media plan. Rather than slipping back into old patterns, you can choose new standards and boundaries that protect the kind of life you are trying to build.

A media plan helps you decide what kinds of media you will consume and what boundaries you will establish around them. It helps prevent you from drifting back into habits around media that damage your life.

If we want to achieve lasting change, we must create *specific* plans, routines, support systems, and environments that support our goals.

It is suggested that you read through your media plan weekly or monthly and ponder your progress. You can use the “Checking In” pages at the end of this companion guide, if desired. We strongly

recommend scheduling that weekly or monthly check-in on your calendar. We cannot express enough how easily unhealthy media habits can slip back into your life if you don't continually plan, evaluate, and stay committed to your goals. Given how prevalent and enticing media is in our world, most people will need to practice this kind of intentional planning throughout their lives in order to live the lives they truly want.

Perfection is not expected. If you fail, which you likely will in some areas, give yourself grace and get back on track. Also, remember that the media plan is not meant to make your life feel more restrictive but freer, richer, more intentional, more joyful, and more vibrant. It's designed to help *widen* your world again—slowing you down, restoring depth, making you more present, strengthening real-life relationships, and creating room for what truly matters.

► Media Plan Instructions

HOW TO CREATE THE PLAN

Read the instructions for each section on the next three pages, and then turn to the corresponding section in “My Personal Media Plan” and fill it out. We recommend writing in pencil so you can erase and update your plan in the future.

As you implement your plan, we suggest using the “Checking In” pages at the end of this guide weekly

or monthly. Also, you may find that you need to make adjustments as you reflect on your progress, as you grow, and as life changes.

SOCIAL MEDIA CONSUMPTION

In the “Social Media Consumption” section, write about your plan for social media. This can include time limits, types of content you will not follow, and other boundaries. Be specific. Here are some example sentences you could include:

- I will check social media only once a day for 15 minutes. I will set a timer and get off as soon as it ends. I will not browse or scroll through feeds. I will not follow or view accounts that lead me to comparison or that contain negative, profane, or immodest content.
- I will check social media only on Saturdays. I will set the in-app time management feature to 30 minutes. I will not follow accounts that don't align with my values.
- I will not use social media.
- I will use social media only for connecting with friends and family and will not browse or scroll through feeds.

SOCIAL MEDIA POSTING

In the “Social Media Posting” section, write your plan for social media posting. Be specific. Here are some example sentences you could include:

- I will not use social media.
- I will always pause before posting and honestly evaluate my intent. I will post about things

that shift attention away from appearance and toward meaning, character, and connection.

- I will not intentionally post a curated life to make myself look impressive or perfect. Rather, I will strive to be genuine, to uplift others, and to point toward what is real, good, and meaningful.

MUSIC

In the “Music” section, write your plan for music. Be specific. Here are some example sentences you could include:

- I won't listen to music containing any profanity or sexual lyrics.
- I won't listen to music that promotes violence, aggressive behavior, lust, or negativity.
- I will limit my exposure to fast-paced music with heavy beats to keep my brain from getting used to consistent high stimulation.
- I will listen to songs that promote my real-life values.
- I will listen to uplifting music more often (worship, spiritual, classical, etc.).
- I will intentionally make time without music to allow room for stillness and reflection.

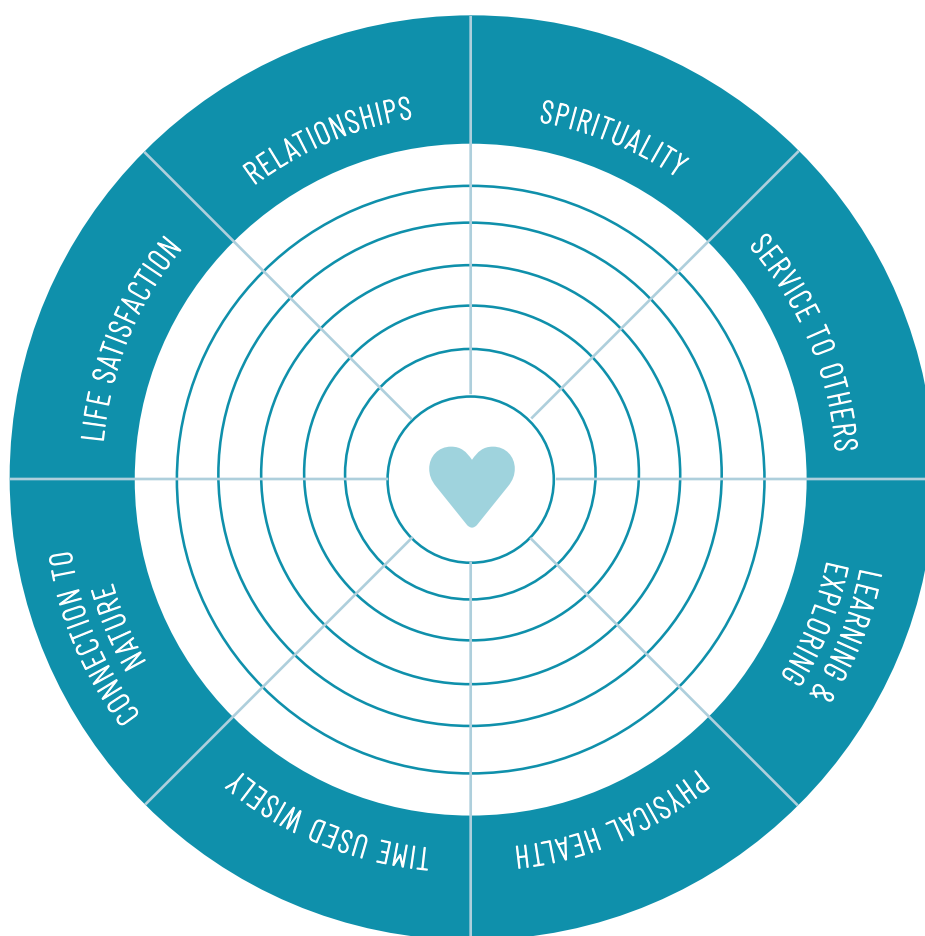
VIDEOS, MOVIES, AND TV

In the “Videos, Movies, and TV” section, write your plan for videos, movies, and TV. Be specific. Here are some example sentences you could include:

► Compare Your Progress

At the beginning of this companion guide, you were asked to complete the diagram below to track what you felt your proficiency, skill, and accomplishment was in each category. Now that you've completed your 30-Day Media Reset and created a Personal Media Plan, follow the instructions below to fill out the diagram again.

Beginning with the outer ring, place a dot in each section of the diagram to represent your current level of satisfaction in that area. Dots closer to the center indicate higher satisfaction.



Discussion Questions

If you are doing this program with family, friends, or a group, consider discussing the following questions. Or, if you are doing the program individually, you can journal about one or more of the questions.

1. Which areas have you improved in most, and which areas have you improved in less? Why?
2. What is the most valuable improvement to you?
3. What do you need to do to improve in the weakest areas?
4. What did this activity teach you about the principle of intentionality?

GOOD ON PURPOSE

LIVING FULLY IN A
DIGITALLY DISTRACTING WORLD

WRITTEN BY

JENNY PHILLIPS & PATCH CROWE

Accompanying the new publication *Good on Purpose: Living Fully in a Digitally Distracting World*, this self-directed guide aims to help you take control of your social media and tech habits. Through thoughtful questions and suggestions, you can completely change your habits utilizing the thorough and challenging 30-Day Media Reset, using your experience to craft a long-term Media Plan. Spend the next month completely transforming your life and gain more good and beautiful days as you stop to appreciate God's creations—including yourself!



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