

OLUWATOSIN OLABODE

# DIGITAL WELLNESS

STRUCTURES AND SOCIETY  
IN THE TECH ERA

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“Oluwatosin’s work represents the future of Digital Wellness Education - a model based in a positive digital culture and Digital Flourishing®.” — **Nina Hasher**, CEO & Co-founder Digital Wellness Institute

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# **Digitally Well**

Other books by Oluwatosin Olabode:

Digital Wellness:

- The Concise Guide to Online Etiquettes
- Building & Maintaining a Professional Online Presence
- No Gadget Hangout Resource Guide.

Poetry:

- To Love Or Not To Love
- When God Falls In Love

Inspirational:

- Insights
- The Big One

# **Digitally Well**

*Structure & Society in the  
Technology Era*

**Oluwatosin Olabode**

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ISBN: 978-978-794-138-6

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# Praise for Digitally Well

*Digitally Well* is an insightful and thought-provoking guide for leading a fulfilling life in the 21st century. Throughout the book, Oluwatosin highlights several important factors that must be addressed in order to improve the way we live with technology. His messages, particularly around discovering our identity, resonates with me. If we have a deeper understanding of who we are, of our vision, and of our intention, we can then lead lives where technology serves us instead of us serving it. You will find helpful and actionable tips within *Digitally Well* that you can implement into your life today. Oluwatosin makes it clear that it is not only our relationship to technology that must be assessed, but also our relationship to ourselves and with our fellow humans. I highly recommend this book to anyone who is looking to live a more purposeful life, away from the distracting clutter that can so easily plague us in the online space."

— Patrick McAndrew

*Actor, Podcast Producer, Digital Wellness Advocate*



*Digitally Well* is an important, incredibly uplifting, and timely book. I expected it to be full of information and cautionary tales of tech overload, which it is, but it is also quite empowering and worldly-wise. The book helps to put technology and humanity back into the right relationship and to give the reader actionable tools, tips, and hacks to shape their usage of technology to match their personal goals and intentions and to avoid "drift". The first section of the book is dedicated to getting grounded in oneself: discovering and defining who we

are and accepting ourselves with clarity and love. Only from that solid foundation, explains Oluwatosin, can we ensure that technology is in service to our greatest good. He provides excellent tools to the reader to establish that foundation, and his examples from his own self-discovery are very helpful and illuminating. Sprinkled throughout are witty and wise quotes and anecdotes that help reinforce the lessons and recommendations. This book is a wonderful resource that gently guides us into living with awareness and intention, both online and offline.”

— Amy Giddon  
*CEO & Co-founder Daily Haloha*



"Who am I?" — a question human beings have always asked ever since our brains developed the capacity to think in deeper and more abstract ways than any other species in the history of our planet. In this book, Oluwatosin Olabode tackles one of the greatest factors shaping that question today: Technology. With much eloquence and little fear, he explores the ways in which technology can influence who we are and argues for the vital importance of first knowing the answer to this identity question, before creating or engaging with technology. Combining philosophical insights and practical tips, *Digitally Well* is sure to be embraced not only by our community of digital wellness practitioners but by those who stand to be most deeply impacted in the future by the decisions we make today around the design and implementation of technology: our youth.

— Teodora Pavkovic,  
*Lead Cyber Safety and Digital Wellness Expert at LineWize by  
FamilyZone*



This is a concise and accessible guidebook for anyone looking to live well in the digital era. Oluwatosin Olabode draws on his experience working with young people to provide practical advice on managing technology use in a healthy way, by taking advantage of its benefits and reducing its potential harms. The unique feature of this guidebook is its emphasis on identity development as a crucial ingredient for living well with technology. Olabode skillfully makes the case that knowing who we are is fundamental to being more intentional in our actions, both online and offline. The guidebook is filled with inspirational quotes and hacks to help the reader get started on the path toward living digitally well.

— Anna Lomanowska, PhD  
*Founder & Director, Digital Well-Being Lab*



*To healthy digital footprints!*

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# Foreword

The coming of COVID-19 and the resultant prevalence of isolation and remote work has highlighted the need to integrate how mental health intersects with our digital habits. As this revolution in work and life evolves, so must our terminologies, practices, and intentions for living in a fast-paced world. From compulsive device usage to FOMO, nomophobia, and technology-based insomnia, everyone has a different entry point to the topic of digital wellness, causing them to explore what mental health and wellness mean. While some may have seen overly plugged-in children and have had worries about gaming addiction, others may have personally experienced depression, distraction, and a loss of productivity with Doomscrolling.

Oluwatosin's moment occurred after he launched his mental health foundation in Africa. He saw first-hand how technology overuse and misuse were having negative effects on the psychological well-being of the youth around him. At the same time, he saw how this same technology could be harnessed for good—to combat depression, social isolation and so much more. The practical application of this knowledge to individuals, families, workplaces, and communities, is what makes Oluwatosin such a powerful educator, teacher, and author.

It has been my pleasure to track the journey of Digital Wellness Educator and pioneer, Oluwatosin Olabode, as he has written "Digitally Well," creating precisely what the world needs: guidance on mental health in a time of digital overwhelm. Knowing Oluwatosin for years and his passion for this work, it was no surprise to me that he became the first Certified Digital Wellness Educator in Africa. It was an absolute

pleasure having him in my courses during which he asked profoundly thought-provoking questions and sparked authentic dialogues among his peers.

It was his combination of insight and skill that resulted in his nomination to speak on a highly sought-after panel for Digital Wellness Day – reaching over 7 million people in 36 countries in 2022. As an Ambassador for Africa and Expert Speaker for Digital Wellness Day, Oluwatosin embodied the educational spirit of this global, annual campaign, sharing his voice and perspective on achieving digital wellness through a lens of communication best practices.

Seeing the great work of Oluwatosin is one of the reasons I created the Certified Digital Wellness Educator Program – in which he took part – with the mission of disseminating programming that didn't exist a decade ago, and creating a base of research, curriculum, and community within the Digital Wellness Movement. To see an educator like Oluwatosin take our Digital Flourishing® Framework and apply it fills my heart with joy and hope, as his work represents the future of Digital Wellness Education - a model based in a positive Digital Culture and Digital Flourishing®: a mindful approach to digital technology usage that is healthy-tech instead of anti-tech which allows us to harness the benefits of technology while mitigating mental and physical downsides.

This empowerment-oriented education model is encapsulated so beautifully in “Digitally Well.”

There is no doubt in my mind that readers will flock to *Digitally Well* because Oluwatosin embodies a refreshing approach that normalizes common challenges and focuses on the path forward, the opportunities to reclaim our peace of mind, and the solutions that will unite us.

*Nina Hersher, MSW*

*Chief Educational Officer & Co-founder Digital Wellness Institute,  
Best-selling Author, Your Playbook for Thriving in the Remote  
Work Era*



# Introduction

“Technology, in itself, moves faster than the research into its impact” — Lisa Jones.

Digital footprints are *the trails of our online behaviours and personal information (data) we leave on the Internet.*<sup>1</sup> They are who we are and what we do within the digital space. *It took growing older and studying digital wellness to realize that many of my digital footprints were not as healthy as I would have wanted them to be; they did not necessarily align with the ultimate goals of who I am and wanted to become.*

Technology was designed to improve our lives, make things easier for us, and increase our productivity. So, in general terms, the concept of technology is not bad. However, our interpretations and usage of technologies can be either good or bad. In other words, they *can have a positive or negative impact on us*, and this is often based on our perception and worldview about life.

I am not alone: in my interactions with young people through my foundation, a non-profit that provides mental health intervention, I became increasingly aware of how technology in all its various forms, especially social media and instant messaging platforms, was impacting these young people. It started impacting their emotional and psychological well-being, leading to FOMO (*fear of missing out*), anxiety and prolonged sadness that mostly led to depression (from waiting and wanting to feel among and or *'live the life'*), lack of defined identities, and misplaced priorities such as wanting to be accepted before accepting themselves. As Neuroscience has shown, a lack of support structure is associated with increased mental illness and more. We will see this in *Digitally Well*.



Of course, there are always two sides to any story. There are also positive and productive use of technologies, including those that helped them (and people in general) to access care and mental health support. However, as a suicide prevention advocate and digital wellness educator, my focus was to bring balance to the narrative such that everyone, and young people especially, didn't just live but were alive. This is essential, considering that there is hardly much we can get done without the use of technology! Digital wellness has become a necessity in our generation: *Digital Wellness is a way of life while using technology that promotes optimal health and well-being in which body, mind, and spirit are integrated by the individual to live more fully within the human, natural, and digital communities.*<sup>1</sup>

Moving forward, no digital and/or wellness conversations can ever be complete without a conversation on digital wellness. Thus, this book is for anyone looking for balance: on one part, technology is the best traction ever, and on the other hand, we can let it become a great distraction.

— Oluwatosin Olabode

**The journey to Living Digitally Well begins with YOU!**

**Let's do this...**



# Identity

“It is not what you are called, but what you answer to”  
— **African Proverb.**

“Know, first, who you are, and then adorn yourself  
accordingly” — **Epictetus.**

Our understanding and acceptance of ourselves are based on our interpretation of life and our perception of life determines the kind of life that we live, notwithstanding who we are. Knowing who we are is, therefore, of utmost importance.

"In its wisest possible sense, a man's Self is the sum of all that he CAN call his, not only his body and his psychic powers, but his clothes and his house, his wife and the children, his ancestors and his friends, his reputation and works, his land, and horses and yacht and bank account. All this give him the same emotions. If they wax and prosper, he feels triumphant; if they dwindle and die away, he feels cast down - not necessarily in the same degree for each thing, but in much the same way for all"  
— **Williams James (1890).**"

## WHO ARE WE?

Our identity is who we are: everything we have been, currently are, and will ever be. It is our belief and essence for existing. It is what differentiates us from anyone else in a world of over 7.8 billion people. It is why we are alive now and not in any other era. Even in this era,

some are Generation Alpha, Generation Z, Millennials, Generation X, and more. Our purpose flows from identity as we emote our various expressions.

Peace of mind and true satisfaction can only come from a place of realizing, understanding, and accepting who we are, then interpreting life appropriately from there. Our identity is not defined in comparison to anyone else, nor does the beauty in who we are, come from the responsibilities we express being greater or lesser than anyone else.

## IDENTITY CRISIS

“Life is full of mysteries, but your identity should not be one of them” — **Awolumate Samuel.**

Identity crisis occur once we begin to interpret who we are from the wrong sources—*be it society, situation, or social media*. It starts from the moment we begin to question our sense of self at the expense of our mental state—*our ability to think and act on those thoughts*. It is often a state of confusion stemming from conflicting circumstances; moments requiring critical decisions.

Coined by Erik Erikson, an American-German Psychologist, identity crisis is *now being accepted as designating a necessary turning point, a crucial moment, when development must move one way or the other, marshalling resources of growth, recovery, and further differentiating. This proves applicable to many situations: a crisis in individual development or in the emergence of a new elite, in the therapy of an individual, or in the tensions of rapid historical change.*<sup>2</sup> No one is designed to remain in a crisis. When they occur, we are eventually supposed to overcome them, with the right tools.

## THE INTERPRETATION BARRIER

“...As a person of English origin who is fluent only in English, when someone is speaking in Chinese, your inability to understand is not a function of not hearing or listening properly, but rather an inability to decode the encrypted language as you are yet to develop the tools required — **Oluwatosin Olabode**

We can never grow above our interpretation of life because our interpretation of life determines whether we grow or not. The interpretation barrier occurs when we have a distorted view of who we are and define ourselves by societal approvals.

Harbouring disempowering thoughts, accepting labels and realities as truths, and subjecting self to social comparisons are some dangerous limiting belief templates that can stain our understanding of who we are. I recently learned that *nothing is ever as good and or bad as they seem* and with the principle of hedonic adaptation (*the notion that after positive (or negative events (i.e., something good or bad happening to someone), and a subsequent increase in positive or negative feelings, people return to a relatively stable, baseline level of affect*)<sup>3</sup>. This is gradually becoming ever so clear.

Our perception and perspective on life play a significant role in how our bias can influence the interpretive barriers that limit us from exploring who we really are. So, it is of utmost importance to know the source of our interpretations. This is key because anything you feed long enough will begin to feed you. As **Dr. Shauna Shapiro** puts it: *what you practice grows stronger*.

Every path has a principle that unlocks and decrypts all encoded information. In the case of the language barrier in the opening quote above, the best solution is to learn Chinese (*or use a translation*

*medium*), and not to keep advancing in English and wondering why you do not understand Chinese.

At this point, you might be wondering: *How do we break the interpretation barrier?* I'll tell you how.

Think about the statement below and, without trying to finetune them, write down the first thoughts that come to mind. You can do this in the workbook section of the book on page 89.

1. *Who are you?*
2. *What is the most important thing to you?*
3. *What value is the world getting through you?*
4. *What reputation are you building?*
5. *What will your legacy be?*

Using the [mind-mapping<sup>4</sup>](#) strategy, answer the questions above. The mind mapping strategy is a way of visually organizing your thoughts on a particular matter, with the key thought at the centre (see *figure one on page 24*) and the key themes of understanding and explanations linked to it.

Interestingly, the answers to Questions 2-5 are a summation of what Question 1 represents. One key way to identify who you are is to list out the things that are most important to you. Note that there is no limit. *If it matters to you, is healthy to you, and is healthy to society, then you are on the right path.*

We often respond to the question of who we are by telling people our names or what we do. While that is a good start, it is not in itself who we are. *Our names are the identifiers that help others call the entity of who we are. What we do is an expression—like an outlet—of who we are.* Unlike our names and what we do, our identity is the thing about us that makes us and does not change.

**FIGURE ONE-**

This is a brief explanation of how I arrived at the summary for question number one below.



Question: Who are you?

Answer: I AM A WEALTH OF POSITIVE ENERGY



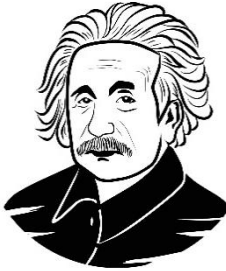
## SUMMARY OF RESPONSES FROM MIND MAP:

1. *I am a wealth of positive energy.*
2. *Making the world a better place, one positive message at a time.*
3. *Positive outlooks and perspective—alternative thinking towards life situations.*
4. *Helping young people live and lead transformative lives.*
5. *Making my world and the ones around me a better place.*

## THE DISCOVERY PROCESS:

*“I met a lot of people in Europe. I even encountered myself” — James Baldwin*

The only way to solve the interpretation barrier is to know who you are in time; to understand your traits and personalities; to observe how you respond and react to situations; to know your motivations and inspirations; to be able to differentiate between *raw data* and *already processed* information; to know your inert bias; and to be able to capture decisions as you are figuring them out. Our interpretations at any given point in time is a product of the current understanding that we have at those moments. That is why we often say things like, *“oh, I now know better.”*



*Albert Einstein was famously reported to have given his students a final exam that was a year old. In fact, Einstein had given his students the exact same final exam the year before. His assistant noticed the “error” and timidly made the famous physicist aware of his mistake. Einstein looked closer at the newly distributed sheet and answered: “You’re right, these are the same questions as last year, but the answers have changed.”*

This is essential because, for as long as we are alive, we would keep discovering and coming to the full realization of who we are. We do not create our identities but discover them as we journey through life. The challenge, however, with the interpretation barrier is that we often hold on to the realities of the past as the accurate defining factors of who we are today.

In essence, interpretation barriers stand solid in our lives when we stop interpreting per time and start interpreting “passed-time”—when we stop interpreting with the internal stimuli and start interpreting with the external and societal stimulus (*what’s trending, what seems to be the accepted norms, or what we think others will like*). Though we have made certain mistakes, WE ARE NOT THOSE MISTAKES. We are not the errors of our past; we are lessons learned and we are better people for it.

Accepting who we are—*our identity*—is critical to fulfilling our purpose here on this Earth. We did not come into existence at the exact moment that we did by accident (whether our parents planned to have us or not).

## INTERNAL LANGUAGE CYCLE

### “Cut yourself some slack”

Our internal language cycles are the patterns with which we communicate with and about ourselves. This is one thing I struggled to balance myself. *I have often found it difficult to cut myself some slack. It was easy to give advice, but I could not understand why it was so difficult to take and use that same advice for myself. I was not (within this context) missing an opportunity to remind myself of how bad I had it or was having it. I spoke out a lot, but it was more within my thoughts.*

The challenge some of us have is that we are okay speaking negatively about ourselves so long as we do not speak them out loud, forgetting that our minds listen and operate from those empowering or disempowering thoughts.

The things we say about ourselves based on our beliefs about ourselves shape the way we accept life and the things in life that we accept. They impact our reflection on life. If we say life is beautiful, then this is true to us. If we say life is not beautiful, then this is also true to us. Words and thoughts have power, more power than we realize or would admit.

The idea with having positive internal language cycles is not to live in pretence or deny the emotions that come with situations that we face, or even lie about them to others. NO! the goal is to *consider both sides of every story and situation* and build an arsenal of positive thinking and empowering words that guide and encourage us out of those situations.

*Personally, in those moments when I was not cutting myself some slack, I noticed that even though I didn't want to feel the way I felt when things didn't go as planned, my thoughts and words were rather disempowering and against my intentions.* Therefore, we must learn to adjust our internal language cycles to support **where we want to be**. Also, having an ecosystem that supports this value is of extreme importance. (It is okay to seek professional guidance about this. *Shame is a very dangerous decision-making tool*).

Our **Self-concept**—*the idea we have about who we are and what we can do with who we are based on evaluation of ourselves*, **Self-worth**—*answers we give to accepting who we are which form the backbone of our belief about how valuable we are notwithstanding what others might think*, and **Self-esteem**—*the overall appreciation for self-concept and self-worth*, all play significant roles in the way our internal language cycles are set up.

## THE SETUP

“We need creativity in order to break free from the temporary structures that have been set up by a particular sequence of experience.” — Edward De Bono

Have you ever considered why we do not have personal structures that govern how we live with the highest form of intent? Why do we have these structures (*at least thoughts of them*) in our head or written down but seldom act on them?

Our organizations, the companies and institutions we work with, and our schools all have *a vision statement, a mission statement, and a set of core values* that guide their operations and define their identity to the world around them while differentiating them from every other establishment. Since we are the creators and upholders of these standards that build effective work structures, better productivity, and better well-being for these organizations and institutions, isn't it time that we began to do same for ourselves?

We can easily tell when an organization is deviating from company goals because we have built structures that help us observe and align its activities. It is also the reason we pursue certain businesses with certain companies and people and not every random company or person. In like manner, it is important for us to have a personal vision statement, mission statement, and core values because they will help to ensure that we continue to evolve and expand in this rapidly changing world (*and ever-growing digital era*) without losing who we are. With them,

our true identity does not change as we keep discovering new things about ourselves.

Without a defined structure, we tend to drift from who we are. And, because drifting is so slow a process, we often do not take notice of it until it is too late. Setting up these statements, owning them, and living them, will help ensure that we do not lose sight of who we are.

## UNDERSTANDING THE TERMS:

“Knowing others is intelligence; knowing yourself is true wisdom. Mastering others is strength, mastering yourself is true power.” — Lao Tzu

**VISION:** Your vision is where you want to see the world because of your input in it. *Where you want to see the world* is significantly more important than *where you want to see yourself **only***, as the latter does not account for the consequences of your actions to the world and could easily mean you are hurting the world (*nature and people*) if it serves your intentions. However, **with the former**—considering the world at large—it saddles upon you the responsibility to be kind and compassionate even as you journey to your destination.

Your vision is the response to the ultimate question you want to have answered at the end of your days on our Earth. This answers questions four and five in our mind mapping figure one. Achieving *your vision puts a smile on your face*—you know without a *doubt that living was worth it and worthwhile*.

**MISSION:** Your mission is how you achieve your vision. It is your action plan and modus operandi. It is the process of identifying and prioritizing your expressions (*further explained below*) and outlets to fulfil purpose. Your mission is how you stand for the things that are important and matter to you.

**CORE VALUES:** These are the watchdogs that checkmate your moves to ensure that you remain within your vision and mission. They are every

action and inaction you take to stay within the wealth of your peace of mind. Some examples of core values are dedication, friendship, integrity, faith, and excellence.

**EXPRESSIONS:** These are the channels through which we accomplish our essence of existing. People often confuse their expressions with who they are—in doing so, we limit what we can be. For instance, I write. To me, writing *is one of the ways I express who I am. I am a wealth of positive energy.* Writing is a tool with which I pass this positive “messaging” around the world. *I believe the world is a better place, one positive message at a time.* What happens if, for some reason, I am no longer able to write and or there are no writing platforms again, *or the world decides no one should read? Possibly, as is the case for most people, I will begin to lose myself...but only if I have attached everything that I am to writing.* *For some people, that one thing could be marriage, relationships, jobs, etc...* This should never be the case. What should happen when you lose one channel or form of expression is that you move into another form or channel of your expression. For me, another expression is public speaking. All I need to do, or begin to do, is pass those positive messages through public speaking.

**The same goes for all of us.**

We should have various outlets through which we express ourselves and we must never allow interpretation barriers to confuse the tools that help us express ourselves as who we are. We must have alternatives too. Otherwise, once the only channel seems to no longer be working, we may also no longer be working.

Take a footballer for example. Playing the beautiful game is one of his or her expressions but being a footballer is not the summation of who he or she is. This is why many superstar players, despite being retired, are still making an impact through other channels within or outside the sports space.

## CRAFTING STATEMENTS

“Vision without action is a daydream. Action without vision is a nightmare”  
— Japanese Proverb.

Statements do not necessarily have to be conclusively crafted in one attempt. As we evolve, we gain more clarity into conceptualizing and wording what we represent: *the sum of who we are*. So, do not beat yourself up if you do not like the first few ideas that come to mind. My first vision statement was written in 2012—the one I am working with now was developed in 2018 *with the guidance of a clarity coach*. This is not to say that yours should take that long. I did not revisit mine within the first five years. *About 30 minutes of dedicated focus can work wonders in setting yours up.*

It is important to establish that there is no one-size-fits-all *with mind mapping*, and it is not a competition of who is better but rather to create something beautiful that reflects who you are and why you are on our Earth. There is also no fixed length: some are only five words long while others are over 30 words.

Using the mind-mapping strategy, answer the following questions:

1. *What is your vision?*
2. *What is your mission?*
3. *What are your core values?*

*The mind mapping strategy is a way of visually organizing your thoughts on a particular matter—with the key thought at the centre and the key themes of understanding and explanations linked to it.*

**FIGURE TWO:**

This is a synopsis of the first drafts of my vision statements for 2012 and 2018.

*My goal is to make others happy.  
Encourage them to understand that they  
can do it and gain an understanding  
that God has their back (2012)*

**WHAT IS  
YOUR  
VISION**

*To make the world a better place, one positive message at a  
time, as we all reveal the uniqueness that God's greatness  
has deposited in us to impact the world. (2018)*

Question: What is your Vision?

Answer = To raise a generation of young people who will have a positive impact on the world through their expressions.



## SUMMARY OF RESPONSES FROM THE MIND MAP:

1. *To raise a generation of young people that will impact the world with a positive perspective.*
2. *Helping young people realize and utilize the positive energies within them towards living and leading a transformative life.*
3. *Spirituality/Service/Integrity*

## I.D.E.N.T.I.T.Y. IN SUMMARY:

1. IDENTIFY what you were created for—it answers the question of, “why am I still alive?”
2. DEFINE who you are, and what you are.
3. EVERYTHING matters! Understand that everything that has happened to you and will happen to you counts.
4. NOTHING happens by accident! Your place of birth and everything within and outside your control was strategic. It was the best opportunity for you to make the best out of life. However, note that no one is an island of self—we are interconnected. It is inevitable that people’s failure to do their part affects the timing of yours.
5. TIMING is important! Everything exists in time and operates within time. Understand that identity is peculiar to individuals and it is the continuous discovery of self. Identity is not created but discovered.
6. INTENTIONALITY is key! We must be intentional and deliberate in our quest to discover who we are. This is the process we use in studying how we exist—*our passion, influence of purpose, hobbies, and preferences.*
7. TRUTHFULNESS always pays. One of the greatest disservices we can do to ourselves is to lie and pretend. This happens a lot

## Identity

within the digital identities we create. In order to appreciate who we are, we must take an honest evaluation of ourselves, one that is not tainted by bias, comparisons, or other factors that can be compromised by our faulty perception of life. It must be an internal charge with external factors acting as indicators.

8. YOU are the most important component for your journey to discovery- **there is no you without you**. Your body, mind, and spirit must align and become one to be able to experience the peace and calm that helps you live in the now. It also helps you answer the most important question ever posed: who am I?

“Be yourself; everyone else is already taken” – Oscar Wilde.





# Digitally Well

“It’s not just about reducing screen-time but increasing our HUMAN time” — Bagby.

Once upon a time, we had two worlds: the physical world stood independently as humans began to birth the digital world. We now exist in a world that is a merge of the digital and physical. Now, many things that could have been done independently before, without the use of technology, can hardly be done without involving one form of technology or the other.

The concept of technology itself isn’t bad. Technology is a human invention designed to make life easier while improving quality, service delivery, and productivity levels. However, its creators and users can make good, and or bad decisions based on their perceptions and interpretations of life.

This further supports why knowing who we are (our identity) is important. Our humanity must come before technology because our identity—*who we are*—forms the technology that we create and how we use it. With a solid identity, we can use technology knowing that the concept and idea behind it is to improve human efforts and capabilities by being more efficient.

One thing that stands out in my line of work—relating with young people **that define themselves by the standards of social media** as compared to those that know who they are and know with or without social media *and are intentional and deliberate about their usage or lack thereof*—is **that sense of social isolation**: the prolonged sadness that often led to depression, loneliness, and self-comparisons.

According to research by **Jean Twenge**, *adolescents who spent more time on new media (including social media and electronic devices such as smartphones) were more likely to report mental health issues, and adolescents who spent more time on non-screen activities (in-person*

*social interaction, sports/exercise, homework, print media, and attending religious services) were less likely.*<sup>5</sup>

The determining factor when speaking with these young people is how they are using these technologies. Those who have come to understand their self-worth focus more on building “quality” and meaningful interactions *and are often happier, as research indicates*, while those that have not found themselves often focus on “quantity”—*the number of interactions they can gather to drive engagements on their platforms*.

It is clear that social media and technology are not the problems because neither was created to become a problem. Rather, they indicate that problems do exist in our lives whenever. Ironically, we live in the most connected era, yet a lot of people can confirm that this is the most disconnected we have ever been. We can therefore state that how we use them is an indication of whether problems do exist in our lives.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century is an attention economy, and since we exist in a digital world, digital spaces and designs have been saddled with the responsibility of taking advantage of our time, especially **when we lack the use of it**. As such, that currency translates into money for the creators. This is why identity plays a significant role.

“The only time that is not wasted time is the time we plan to waste” — **Nir Eyal**.

Research shows that tech designers (*some of them*) care a great deal about numbers. They make more money the more they get you hooked on their design. *I strongly feel that designers should focus on improving the effectiveness or efficiency of those that make use of their products and services, rather than push to influence the usage of those products or services with manipulative strategies*. But business is about profit.

Within the concept of identity are our core values, which guide whether our visions are about us alone or inclusive of the world. We cannot afford to wait (*while we hope for the implementation of the many policies that support digital wellness that are in the works in most*

*countries*) solely for these designers to have a change of heart. We must begin to develop the stamina and technical know-how for building the discipline needed to be intentional and deliberate with our online time.

We become what we constantly feed and spend our time on. Therefore, we cannot overemphasize that getting our identities right before the creation or usage of technology would have a significant impact on the digital footprints that we leave.

I mentioned earlier that identity is not created (*except if you want to become someone else*), but discovered over time. This means that, within digital spaces, we do not need to be creating new digital identities but should be discovering our “personal” identities and translating and transferring them into our digital experiences by the codes and conducts—*what we call values in purpose discovery*—most comfortable to us and are safe online. To trust and be trusted is an important virtue of the digital space. This drives whether we are digitally well or not.

There are a million and one reasons to be online, and each reason is unique to every one of us. In reading *Digitally Well*, my hope is that you begin to understand and realize ways to build balance as you interact within these digital walls. *As much as 78% of people share information online because it helps them stay connected to people they may otherwise not stay in touch with, and 68% of people said that they share to give people a better sense of who they are and what they care about (The Psychology of Content Sharing Online In 2020 [NYT], 2019)<sup>6</sup>*. This NYT study zeroed down on five key motivations for why people share things online:

1	•To bring valuable and entertaining content to others
2	•To define themselves to others.
3	•To grow and nourish relationships.
4	•For self- fulfilment.
5	•To get the word out about things they believe in

We must ensure that our attention is on our intentions to be able to ensure that we are achieving these stated objectives—and *any other ones that we might personally have*. We have to get our intentions right for our digital identities. Otherwise, we will drift into an endless ocean of possibilities within the digital space (*as digital maximalists*). This might sound like a good thing until we realize that not all possibilities align with who we are. This is partly why people surf the Internet unendingly and unproductively. As **Lewis Carroll** said, “*if you do not know where you are going, everywhere will look like it.*” This is not a great way to live. The concept of drifting is so slow that we hardly notice it until one day we are like:

Are you kidding me? How did I get here? How did I get so hooked on this?

A larger percentage of our time is now spent within the digital space. According to **We Are Social** and **Hootsuite** in their [Digital 2022 reports](#) (Kemp, 2022), *the average Internet user now spends 6 hours and 58 minutes online each day, which equates to more than 100 days of connected time of Internet use per year. If we can sleep for up to 8 hours a day, that means we are currently spending more than 40% of our waking lives using the Internet*<sup>7</sup>. Therefore, it is important that we arm ourselves with the knowledge and understanding of who we are before acquiring bunk spaces within these digital worlds. We must deliberately curate the technologies that we use and the digital footprints that we leave.



If we now understand our vision, mission, and value propositions, the question posed would then be: of those 100+ days (*in 365 days*) of our lives that we spend using the Internet, how many are aligned to and pushing us towards our identity or—with an honest evaluation—are they distracting us from who we are meant to be?

In his book *Indistractable*, bestselling author **Nir Eyal**, spoke about distraction existing only if we know what it is distracting us from. We can only know if these 100+ days are aligned with our intentions if our attention is focused on the expected outcomes of those intentions, and therefore the things that we are doing online. And this conversation is not about a perfect error-free digital lifestyle. NO! It is rather about being aware of WHY and HOW you are doing the things that you do. If my intention was to do office work within a scheduled time, then checking my social media to see engagements on my non-work-related content within that same time will be a *no-go area*.

In Chapter One, we explored how to find and define ourselves. This is key because most people that do not find themselves end up defining themselves according to the workings of the digital platforms they interact with. This often leads to a created version of themselves that they feel people will accept. This false foundation leads to many errors and creates loopholes for frustration and other negative energies to kick in. Imagine a world where those five key motivations from The New York Times study were set up with a faulty foundation; the world would not be a better place—it would be difficult to trust and be trusted. Unfortunately, to some extent, this is the reality we now live in.

So, what's the world like when we are digitally well?

We know that when technology begins to affect our support structures—*relationships, partnerships, and, consequently physical and mental health*—and it is no longer a facilitator for support structures, **then there is a problem.**

Remember that technology was not designed to make us feel worse about ourselves or others, *even though it can become this*. It was not designed for us to become more anxious over social media feeds, *even*

*though it can become this through social comparison (the natural tendency to compare oneself to others in areas of intelligence, wealth, attractiveness, and success – DWI). When this happens because of affordances (a use or purpose that a thing can have, that people notice as part of the way they see or experience it – DWI), backed by interpretation barriers, it can become a challenge to our mental health and general well-being.*

## PONDER ON THESE QUESTIONS

1. Are my digital interactions (*digital habits*) promoting my optimum health and productivity, or are they in one form or another, affecting it?
2. Am I in control of my digital life or does my digital life control me? *Do you pick up your phone at a scheduled time to do specific work, or does every notification make you pick up your phone regardless of what you might have been doing?*

To be digitally well is *our ability to build balance between our offline and online lives and align our digital attention with our intentions. It is to operate with wisdom, understanding, and insight, not just from a place of knowledge. Since the purpose of technology is to improve life while making it better, we should take it as a clue that something is wrong whenever this is not happening. As such, understanding digital wellness is essential.*

According to the **Digital Wellness Institute (DWI)**, *digital wellness is a way of life while using technology that promotes optimal health and well-being in which body, mind, and spirit are integrated by the individual to live more fully within the human, natural, and digital communities.*

It's all about value and how building that balance translates into our lives by leading us closer to where we want to be rather than drifting or hindering us from it. In this dispensation, building a healthier relationship with technology is building a healthier relationship for self.

“To be digitally well is to be in control of your world, both physical (personal) and digital—to have your intentions in your attention and your attention in your intentions.”

The healthier we are, the less likely we would have self-destructive behaviour that would not align with who we are. We must therefore be sure that we are not using technology as a distraction from what matters most to us or allowing technology to distract us from what matters the most.

To be digitally well is to be in control of your world, both physical (*personal*) and digital—to have your intentions in your attention and your attention in your intentions.

“...Human first, better products will follow” — **Ayca Ariyoruk**



# Intentions & Attention

“You can do two things at once, but you can’t focus effectively on two things at once” — **Gary Keller**

## THE MULTITASKING MYTH

As a lot of us are already aware, our attention isn’t always on our intentions. We set out to do one thing but end up doing another. We often comfort ourselves by saying that we are multitasking, but researchers and psychologists have shown that we do not really multitask, as the mind and brain are not designed in that way.

Instead, what we do is called task switching, *an executive function that involves the ability to unconsciously shift attention according to DWI*. As **Dr. Melissa Gratias** rightly points out, “*our brain does not perform tasks simultaneously. It performs them in sequence, one after another, so, when we are multitasking, we are switching back and forth between the things we are doing.*” Similarly, **David Strayer**, a professor of psychology at the University of Utah, and his team [\*found that only 2% of the population is actually proficient at multitasking.\*](#)<sup>8</sup> (Konnikova, n.d.).

It is safe to assume that you and I aren’t part of that percentage! Therefore, our intentions, time, and productivity are *lost in translation* whenever we try to multitask. This is unfortunate because *it takes an average of 23 minutes and 15 seconds to get back to the task* whenever we get distracted [\*according to a University Of California Irvine study, How Long It Takes to Get Back on Track After a Distraction\*](#)<sup>9</sup>.

“Attention Without Intention Is Wasted Energy” — **Chris Bailey.**

## THE RESULT LIE

“Quality is never an accident. It is always the result of intelligent (and deliberate) effort.” — **John Ruskin**

One of the greatest challenges that fuels our desire to continue attempting to multitask is the results that we get, notwithstanding the decisions that we make. Quality is no longer consciously a top priority for many of us, or it really doesn't matter as much compared to the justifications that we have.

Take driving, for instance. In the United States, the [National Safety Council](#) (*Edgar Snyder & Associates*, n.d.) estimates that cell phone use contributes to 1.6 million crashes per year and that 25% of accidents are caused by texting and driving, **with texting being six times more likely to cause an accident than drunk driving.**<sup>10</sup> This statistic should be scary except for the fact that many people who drive and use their devices and do not have accidents will keep doing it. *Someone once told me that his non-fatal car accident did not occur because he was using his phone but because the other driver stopped in the middle of the road.* While this was true, it was not the complete truth. *According to him, his phone kept his eyes off the road, and it wasn't until it was too late that he noticed the car in front of him had stopped.*

The result lie justifies why we are not doing better (*even though we could have done better*). We intend to spend quality time with our significant other but are constantly checking and chatting with our phones, which is distracting the intimacy of the connection we should be having. Yes, we spent time with them, but it was not quality time. Most of us are guilty of it and, even worse, we do not know that it is wrong. There is a word for this within the digital wellness space: **phubbing**—*the practice of ignoring one's companion or companions in order to pay attention to one's phone or other mobile device*<sup>1</sup>. This is the reason children feel parents like their devices more than them.

Consider this from a child's perspective: **Work time**? You are with your devices. **Family playtime**? You are still with your devices. Absolutely NO

digital boundaries. Yet we are shocked that the kids, our partners, or other people feel somehow about us. We do not consider that phubbing in those times is a distraction because, as **Eyal** rightly said *we are not aware of what it is distracting us from since we didn't really set intentions*. In the next chapter, I will share some tools you can use to avoid ecosystems that create conditions for you to need to multitask or even task switch when on scheduled timelines.

We begin to revolve around a process called drifting whenever our intentions aren't made clear or our attention isn't balanced with those intentions. It's so slow we only realize in most cases when we have arrived at a different outcome than we expected. In the child-parent analogy stated earlier, because the parent is probably buried in their world of work, they often lift their eyes from their devices only to realize that the child has long gone to his/her room, or they find themselves saying something along the lines of:

*"Oh sorry,*

*yes, I am with you...*

*I am listening...*

*What did you say again?"*

If we are honest, we've often found ourselves in this dilemma during interactions and communications with others. Research by the University of San José's Department of Psychology has shown that merely having a smartphone in the room is enough to lower your cognitive ability and reduce your ability to pay attention (Del Pilar and Bosch, 2018), and how close a person feels to others<sup>11</sup>. Now, imagine when we are actually using those devices. The problem posed by *the result lie* is that we are often too satisfied with getting results than we are about the quality of the results that we do not even notice these unhealthy habits.

## THE JUSTIFICATION PULL

“The modern conservative is engaged in one of man's oldest exercises in moral philosophy; that is, the search for a superior moral justification for selfishness.” — **John Kenneth Galbraith**

Within the family illustration, if your intention is to spend time with family (*probably Friday evening 5-8 pm was the time that you scheduled*), for most people, being physically present in the gathering or room does it for them. This is the same reason phubbing is a very common phenomenon all over the world. They feel justified that they came to the family engagement even though they did not engage with anyone. They feel justified to be chatting with someone else for the entire length of a date night since they are sitting next to you. They feel justified answering an important call while driving because... *what could happen if they don't?* The list goes on and on, but the overlying idea is that they feel *justified* by the *result lie*.

Our ability to set and or not set our attention on our intentions is what differentiates “quality” from “quantity” in our lives. It is an indicator that shows whether we can flourish while building healthy and meaningful relationships and partnerships.

## INTENTION AND ATTENTION IN CONTEXT

“Please do not talk to me. I have no self-control and will talk to you for two hours and get no work done.”

I’m not sure who the author is, but I love this meme so much. Even though it carries a comedic undertone, it encapsulates the essence and necessity for intention and attention management.



Your **intention** answers your “why,” the purpose of what you want to do—one of the most important questions anyone that wants to thrive must answer. Knowing your why motivates and inspires your how. Your **attention** studies **the how** of your “why.” It focuses specifically on the context of whatever you are doing. In *The Principles of Psychology* (1890), psychologist **William James** stated that attention “*is the taking possession by the mind, in clear and vivid form, of one out of what may seem several simultaneously possible objects or trains of thought... It implies withdrawal from some things in order to deal effectively with others.*”<sup>12</sup>

The concept of attention management does not deny the existence of internal and external triggers that could potentially distract us from whatever we are doing. It, rather, identifies these triggers and creates buffers around them. We will explore how to manage and handle these triggers in the next chapter, when discussing the environment.

Whenever your attention meets your intention, you get satisfaction in knowing your most accurate outcome each time. This accuracy is not on perfection but rather on knowing that you were able to do what you set to do to the best of your abilities.

Whenever your attention meets your intention, you get satisfaction in knowing your most accurate outcome each time. This accuracy is not on perfection but rather on knowing that you were able to do what you set to do to the best of your abilities. This also educates how you respond—*as against reacting*—to situations. It fuels your interpretation of self and the realities of the world you see around you.

Intentions showcase our identity and equip our ability to fulfil our ultimate essence through the activities those intentions set to accomplish. It is the heart of what we want to do, why we want to do it, and how subsequently, the world can and should benefit from it. Our intentions align with our identity while attention considers the

question, **“are these steps that I am taking helping me to achieve what I intended to achieve?”**

“The key is not to prioritize what’s on your schedule, but to schedule your priorities” —Stephen Covey

# Environment

“Being human in the digital world is about building a digital world for humans” — **Andrew Keen**.

To be the best possible versions of ourselves at every point in time, we must set and understand the intentions for every one of those moments. It is the only way that we can create an ecosystem that supports our attention to those actions. I cannot overemphasize the importance of adapting to the right environment in achieving the essence of our existence and the goals that we set for ourselves. The right environment acts as a catalyst, bridging our intentions with our attention.

Our environment is *the surroundings or conditions in which persons, animals, or plants live or operate (DWI)*. When considering this within the context of the digital space, it involves all electronic resources at our disposal—the *Internet, technology, digital devices, etc.*, and the digital footprints we leave through them. We must factor in, as an ultimate goal, our ability to digital flourishing®—*the mindful approach to digital technology usage that supports our thriving in different areas of life. This approach empowers us to take advantage of the benefits of technology while avoiding associated harms (DWI)*.

To better put this into perspective, we must note the World Health Organization’s (WHO) definition of health—*a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity*. Remembering that we now exist as a merged world requires us to understand that whatever we do via the digital world has consequences to us enjoying *health and well-being*. Earlier on, we defined **Digital well-being** *as the optimum state of health, personal fulfilment, and interpersonal satisfaction that everyone using technology can achieve*<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, in getting our environment right and in our ability to digitally flourish, we create for ourselves an ecosystem that enables us to be healthy, well, and sound.

Many years ago, when I wanted to join Facebook, it wasn't a priority for me to create an environment that would support my well-being and aspirations. Rather, I was focused on making as many friends as I could. Note *that there is nothing wrong with making many friends*. However, the challenge for me was that, even though I had over 2,000 friends and their names were boldly written on their pages, I barely knew the names of 10% of them. *Obviously, there was no way I knew anything else about them*. So, what was the point of having so many of those "friends", *especially since it is not a business page*, and even business pages require consistent engagements to convert following to potential buyers?

I could not achieve the intention of making many friends because my attention was just focused on sending and accepting friend requests. Without setting the environment and *deliberately sending* or accepting friend requests that align with my values and create room for constructive deliberations even with conflicting opinions. It would be very difficult to gain wholeness within those digital spaces.

Because my selection of friends was random, so were our engagements. We were not necessarily interested in the same or similar things and we were not engaging on each other's posts. So, we couldn't build a connection and did we have the slightest bit of interest to reach out on a personal level—for me, at least. We were just excited to have bragging rights (*of 2000 or 5000 friends and following*) among our friends.

People still do this. So, we have so many feeds we wish we weren't seeing on our social media pages. Also, we don't want to seem like bad people by blocking or unfriending them. *So, we keep missing important messages because of our inability to filter, which then frustrates our mental health*. In the Hacks segment, I'll share some tips on how to navigate these spaces to ensure that your social media and digital platforms are healthy for you. In the meantime, I'd like to inform you that

"Our intentions answer the whys of what we want to do, and our attention explores how we are doing these things to keep us in check."

blocking and unfriending people are part of the deal! (Caveat— *this has nothing to do with being petty*)

The right environment helps to ensure that you are fully aware of what your intentions are and how you intend to achieve them, as your attention is focused on how and if you are achieving them. It basically overviews the vision and mission of all your endeavours. Our environment helps to show whether we are doing things with intent. I was distracted by the “quantity” (*number*) of friends I was making that I forgot about the “quality” therein.

Remember, our intentions answer the whys of what we want to do, and our attention explores how we are doing these things to keep us in check. I was not achieving my intentions because I was distracted, and I did not even know it. It took growing older and studying digital wellness to realize that many of my digital footprints were not as healthy as I would have wanted them to be. They simply did not align with the ultimate goals of who I am.

The greatest danger to our environment is not caring for it. Without set intentions, distractions roam freely around our rooms. The challenge with this is that, as Eyal rightly said, “*it is only distraction if you know what it is distracting you from.*” For instance, your phone can only be a distraction in your room while on your bed if your intentions were to sleep at that time. If that was not your intention, then using your phone at that moment isn’t a distraction. We must stop living life as it comes: without structure, observations, or guidance.

## DISTRACTIONS

Distraction is a natural phenomenon because our brains are not wired to ignore them. They need a nudge from us, whether it be internally triggered distractions or externally triggered ones. In their publication, *A Wandering Mind Is an Unhappy Mind*, Harvard Psychologists Matthew Killingsworth and Daniel Gilbert found that [\*the human mind is actually wired for this state of continuous distraction\*](#)<sup>13</sup> (Klemp, 2019). Some of the greatest mindfulness experts have been quoted saying they have

had their minds wander occasionally. Therefore, the objective of bringing this clarity is not for us to beat ourselves up, but rather to know that there are ways to build back our focus and potentially avoid self-induced distractions when we set our environment right.

“Although distractions aren’t necessarily our faults, managing them is our responsibility.” — **Nir Eyal**.

If by [definition](#), distraction is the process of interrupting attention and a stimulus or task that draws attention away from the task of primary interest, then we have to consider the solutions as measures and ways to pull ourselves back into our primary interest. I have seen that it is so difficult to do office work when on vacation (and *we can also spoil the essence of the vacation by thinking about work even though work isn’t with us*). However, it is even easier to leave your workload at home during vacations when you value the relationship and wellness that time affords you—***this is one hack: leave office work alone during your personal time.*** Paying attention and or setting templates to pay attention aren’t as bad as we make them to seem. Once we can get our minds right and fully understand our intentions, everything else becomes a step easier. Have you noticed how easy it is to pay attention when we feel the movie is interesting versus when we think that it is not?

Why is it easy to pay attention when we feel the movie is interesting versus when we think that it is not?

One of the strategies for combating distraction is to build traction. **Nir Eyal** defines *traction* as “any action that moves us towards what we really want.” So, the goal of having the right environment is not to focus on what you do not want but rather on what you do want. What do you want?

## HACKS

Earlier we spoke about developing the stamina needed to build the discipline to take responsibility for our intentions and actions. This is important because, whatever hacks are shared below, without discipline, you cannot go far with them. I'll give you an example.

*One of my clients was a young lady we were helping to set up a digital wellness program that involved her going to sleep at the specific times that she sets using the Google digital wellbeing features in her Android phone (Settings, Digital Wellbeing, Wind Down, and Set Timer) to help her stay off her phone. What this feature did was that it helped her consciously remember that it was time to drop her phone and take a break for the rest of the night. The timer is usually set for 10 pm, but on this particular day, after being on the phone for most of the day (a screenshot from her app timer showed most of it had been spent on WhatsApp), she decided to turn off the wind-down feature so she could continue chatting—and in her words, “While away time.” It wasn't until it was 2:15 am the next morning when her battery ran low that she realized what the time was, and if she was going to get any rest before morning to get ready for lectures, she had to end the chat and try to get some sleep. This decision was critical for her because it also informed her to charge the phone outside her room instead of by the socket close to her bed.*

A lot of us fall asleep with our phones in our hands on the bed. Trust me, the temptation to pick it up is higher. For this client, even though she had been equipped with the technical know-how, she hadn't beefed up her discipline to stay consistent with her intention. *Remember, as Eyal says, “the only time that is not wasted time is the time that you plan to waste.”* According to her, this did not just happen once or twice. Even more importantly, the WhatsApp chats weren't aligned with her essence and were affecting her school performance because she wasn't getting adequate rest and wasn't spending the right amount of time preparing for her studies.

For her, as is the case with many of us, we think that we have our discipline on lockdown because we are the ones making certain decisions without realizing the triggers that are making us take those decisions and whether they align with who we are and want to be. So, while digital well-being apps are a good start in our journey to being digitally well, if we do not have the discipline and character, we will only be deactivating them as quickly as we are activating them. Digital wellness is more about who we are than it is about what we do, as it is who we are *with or without interpretation barriers*) that translate into all that we do.

**Jillian C. York**, *Director for International Freedom of Expression at the Electronic Frontier Foundation*, stated that “*we can’t simply rely on technology (alone) to mitigate the harms of technology; rather, we must look at our educational systems, our political and economic systems—therein lie the solutions.*” Separate but equally worth noting, **Adriana Labardini Inzunza**, the *Commissioner of Mexico’s Federal Institute of Telecommunication*, further expatiated on this when she said that “*it requires education, principled thinking, awareness, and discipline to use the Internet as a tool for development rather than a new way to waste time, alienate the mind and body, consume unnecessary stuff, and become more indebted.*”

So, it is important to remember that these hacks are guides to keep you in line with who you are and all that you want to be and do. They are not a replacement, and are not to make you even more dependent on them. To better simplify the hacks, I have divided them into two categories:

1. Online Hacks
2. Offline Hacks

*I have also added a bonus chapter at the end of this book that can be used as a reference guide to creating an environment that does not require tech. It’s called the **No Gadget Hangout**.*



## ONLINE HACKS

For Social Media Platforms: (*Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, Snapchat, YouTube, etc.*)

### RULE 1: CHOSE APPS/PLATFORM THAT SUIT YOU

There is no law that you must be on all social media platforms. No one person can know all the 7.8 billion people that exist in the world. Set your intentions straight, know what you want and hope to achieve, and find the relevant platform(s) that can help you achieve them.

### RULE 2: READ THAT PRIVACY POLICY

Once you have decided on which platforms to join, take a few minutes to study their privacy policy and terms and conditions. A lot of us, *myself included*, are guilty of not doing this. We mostly just read a few lines, scroll down, and *tick the "I agree" box* without knowing what we are agreeing to. In this age of [data mining](#), it is very important to know what data those platforms are collecting, what they are doing with it, and what they can do with the information that we share. Also, remember to always revisit the policies, especially when updates have been made.


### RULE 3: BE DELIBERATE ABOUT DIGITAL CONNECTIONS

Be deliberate about who you follow and who you accept to follow you. Selective following on social media platforms is important because *following any and everybody* robs you of quality content on your feeds. Ideally, we should connect with those that have similar priorities as us and are heading where we are headed, not just anyone for likes or numbers. In the latter scenario, a lot of unnecessary content joins our feeds, and then we begin to struggle to keep up.

There's a concept called digital minimalism that further illustrates this rule and rule one. I'll explain in the next chapter

 **RULE 4: TAKE YOUR PRIVACY SERIOUSLY**

Avoid the Privacy Paradox Loophole—this is defined by DWI as “*the discrepancy between acting in opposition to one’s belief by freely sharing personal information online despite the belief that one is concerned about one’s privacy.*” If you are concerned about your privacy, keep private matters private. Social media can be an illusion and people aren’t always who they say that they are.

 **RULE 5: ALWAYS USE THE SETTINGS FUNCTIONS**

Personally, *this is something I am still learning.* The settings segment of any application is becoming the most attractive feature for me. This is where you get to decide how you want to be known through that platform; it is where you set your privacy limit essentially. Most important features like two-step verification aren’t always set by default: you must manually set them up. A lot of us do not spend enough time in the settings of those platforms. We are often caught in the euphoria of new technology.

 **RULE 6: MIND YOUR DIGITAL NETIQUETTE**

Practice digital etiquette—“*the standards of conduct expected by other digital technology users*” (DWI). Obey the rules of etiquette that apply within online interactions, also known as ‘netiquette. Have manners, be kind, and be compassionate. To trust and be trusted is one of the strongest pillars of the digital space. Do not be a bully. Be decent. Be a human being. Protect your mental health as well as that of those around you.

Remember that the best person to laugh or make fun of in the digital space is you. This is because you are 100% sure of how you would respond and how laughing at yourself will make you feel. Do not make yourself feel good online at the expense of someone else’s issues. That includes being savage on Twitter. We must all remember that your being strong in someone else’s weakness does not mean that you are not weak in someone else’s strength. Have manners, be kind, and be

compassionate. My book, *The Concise Guide to Online Etiquette*, has more details on why and how to observe netiquettes.

### RULE 7: SANITIZE YOUR ENVIRONMENT FREQUENTLY

Setting the right environment means connecting with people that are going where you want to go and not people that are going further away from your direction. Keep filtering—block, unfollow, unfriend, and unsubscribe to anything that is no longer protecting your mental health and well-being (*more context in the next chapter*). If you do not, you will wake up one morning to the realization that your media feeds is super *unhealthy to you and it's beginning to affect the energy in your atmosphere*. Just like in Rule 1 and Rule 3, remember that there is no law that says you must be connected to everyone.

**QUICK DISCLAIMER:** This has nothing to do with being petty or following the cancel culture that can sometimes be faulty. I am not suggesting that you unfollow people that have different opinions than you or people that give you constructive criticism. *If you only surround yourself with people that always agree with you, you will never really grow beyond their often-fake praise*. What I am saying is that once platforms and people stop aligning with your mental health and well-being, it's time to let them go. The most important person in this world is YOU. Without you, you cannot do the things that you exist to do.

Finally, if you follow rule five, you will notice that most platforms have the mute option: where you are no longer seeing content from specific people and they have no idea about it. You can use it if you are *too shy to unfollow or block* outrightly.

### RULE 8: TAKE THE PERIODIC DIGITAL DETOX

It is okay to occasionally take a break from technology. Digital Detox is *a period during which a person refrains from using electronic devices such as smartphones or computers, regarded as an opportunity to reduce stress or focus on the physical world (DWI)*. Once you begin to

feel that things are getting too much, it's okay to just step aside for a bit, get yourself back together, and then return (*if you want to*).

### RULE 9: DON'T FALL VICTIM TO 'FOMO'

While maintaining all the required netiquettes, engage according to your availability and schedules. The fear of missing out (FOMO) and the anxiety that comes with it is making a lot of us miss out on the most important things to us —the things we originally intended to do. Post at the consistency of your pace, because want to, not because you are expecting someone to like it, and do not let notifications rule over you. Be the authentic you. Fail to do this and you will always be having a *feeling of needing to be constantly connected or networked, even when an actual need is absent*. This phenomenon is called the “always on” culture.<sup>1</sup>

## OFFLINE HACKS: FOR MOBILE PHONES

### RULE 1: KNOW AND USE THE HEALTH FEATURES

Both Android and Apple phones have within their settings digital well-being features that can help us to build healthy environments according to whatever we want to achieve. With the features in these settings, you can easily monitor and take actionable steps that help align your intentions with your attention. For Android phones, it is called “**digital well-being**”; for Apple phones, it is called “**screen time.**” Make use of them!

### RULE 2: DECLUTTER YOUR MEMORY

It is okay to declutter. Let go of the apps that are no longer useful to you. Let every app that is within your phone mean something to you, as I hope everything in our rooms do. The things in our environment play a significant role in the energy that flows within our spaces. Make sure they align with you.

### RULE 3: KNOW YOUR APPS AND WHEN TO USE THEM

Consider which location is best for certain apps, depending on the frequency with which you use or cannot stop using them. You might want to have certain apps on your laptop and not on your mobile device and vice versa, depending on which device you use more and which apps you want to use less. For instance, if WhatsApp is a distraction and you are always on your phone, you might want to consider deleting the app from your phone and installing it on your laptop (*or using the browser edition of that application*). This way, you remove the access urge—the *heightened desire that comes from having access to habits you should not be forming*. Again, the idea is to intentionally build stamina and not to run away.

#### RULE 4: BE IN CHARGE OF YOUR NOTIFICATIONS

Switch off notifications using the “**focus mode**” in your phone’s “well-being” feature or use the “**do not disturb**” option that comes with devices. The goal of switching off notifications is that it allows you to focus on whatever task that you have scheduled to do —*be it work, play, or rest*—without distractions from the various other apps popping up.

#### RULE 5: ENGAGE IN OTHER NON-TECH ACTIVITIES

Try alternatives—we are spending so much time on our phones because we aren’t spending enough time doing other things. The “*No Gadget Hangout*” was created for this particular purpose. Since we are going to be using our digital devices most of the time, what activities can we do that do not require them? What digital activities are you currently doing that you can do physically instead of digitally? Remember, as **Henry David Thoreau** rightly said, “*the price of anything is the amount of life you exchange for it.*” With your current digital consumption and usage, you must ask yourself, “am I really *alive*, or am I just *living*?” Ask yourself ‘What unhealthy habits can I replace with healthy ones?’ *because it is no longer enough to just avoid them.*

OFFLINE HACKS: FOR SCHEDULED TIMES, HOMES, WORKPLACES, ETC.

### RULE 1: DON'T SHARE YOUR BED WITH YOUR PHONE

Keep your phones and digital devices away from your room. The temptation of wanting to use it to just check email, *which mostly turns into endless surfing of the Internet*, is usually stronger when the device is just close by. We usually recommend that your phone sleeps in a different room than you. Most times, when I give people this recommendation, they are quick to ask, “what if something bad happens and someone really needs my help?” I usually respond by asking if they are first responders.

This brings me to these questions: Why is your first thought that something bad might happen? All the while that you have been keeping your phone next to you, how many times have you been called because something bad happened? How many times can you say you didn't touch the phone and slept at your designated time?

The truth is that having your phones on your bed or bedside is just creating an opportunity for unhealthy habits. Think about the questions asked and answer them honestly. Now, where will your phone be sleeping tonight?

### RULE 2: KEEP YOUR PHONE OUT OF YOUR WORKSPACE

Unless your work requires you to use your digital devices, keep them far away from your workplace. According to [TeamLease World of Work Report](#) (PTI, 2016b), *an average of 2.35 hours is spent accessing social media at work every day, and 13% of the total productivity is lost owing to social media indulgence alone.*<sup>14</sup> Again, features like focus mode can help you deactivate non-work apps and only focus on work apps. The essence of scheduling is so that you know that your dedicated time is indeed dedicated to those things you are meant to do in the set time and not to other things.

### RULE 3: MAKE BED TIME NO PHONE TIME

Take a clue from the universe. Once it is evening, the atmosphere begins to wind down so that the body can begin to activate its sleep mode,

Electronic background light from our devices gives a blue light effect that delays the activation of our sleep mode. This is the same reason wellness practitioners often recommend zero screen zones in the room and dim lights. [The National Sleep Foundation](#) recommends that you should stop using electronic devices, like your cell phone, at least 30 minutes before bedtime.<sup>15</sup> This is also because excessive screen time always has negative consequences on our physical health (*like eye strain*). With the wind-down feature set, our screens would have already been in a grayscale view, mimicking the natural process of nature. You can also just switch on night mode if your device has that option. That way, the excessive light popping from our phones is reduced.

#### RULE 4: TAKE A BREAK FROM YOUR SCREENS

1. **Dr. Jeff Anshell**, a specialist in vision ergonomics, popularized the “20/20/20” rule. Take a 20-second break every 20 minutes to look at something at least 20 feet away. This is very important because our eyes are often so clued to our screens that we rarely take breaks. *I know you are enjoying what you are doing; YES, still take a break.* When taking breaks, make sure you're taking breaks from screens rather than just from one screen to the next (for example- Laptop to mobile devices).

#### RULE 5: FIND ALTERNATIVE TO DISTRACTIONS

In her book, *The Willpower Instinct*, one of **Kelly McGonigal's** outlets on boosting self-control is called the “10-minute delay” rule. Anytime the access urge kicks in to do something you know is counterproductive to your essence, you hold it out for just 10 minutes. In my personal experience using this rule, the urge (*or interest in the urge*) almost always goes away

“Always remember, your focus determines your reality.”

— **George Lucas**

## Environment







# Social Media & Mental Health

“Social Media are websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking” — DWI.

Social media (alone) has never been the problem. It is 'Who we are, *how we create them*, and how we use them that has always been the problem. There's so much research showing the positive effects social media has on our mental health and well-being; there are many more showing the negative implications to our mental health. In all these researches, one thing stands true: who we are using and responding to these platforms play a very significant role, *more than we care to give credit*.

One of the reasons I started this book by talking about identity is because it is the pillar of all effects we reflect in the digital space—as in the case of social media.

One thing we know for sure is that not every social media user or

content/platform creator will be kind and empathetic. We also cannot wait until the entire population of the world decides to be better humans. Therefore, we must equip ourselves with the stamina and technical know-how to be able to thrive within those spaces as long as we use them. The kinder we are in digital spaces; the more people see kindness as a cool thing. *Who knows? They might even try it!*

The kinder we are in digital spaces; the more people see kindness as a cool thing. Who knows? They might even try it!

**David Babale** said, and I quote, “*it's not what people say about you that hurts, it's what you believe about what they said.*” In knowing ourselves, we can withstand identities that are not true to us and leave platforms and people that do not align with who we are. Knowing who we are doesn't make the process easy, but it certainly makes it a lot easier. Remember, *it is not what we are called but what we answer to* that counts. A lot of our frustrations sometimes come from a place of not

knowing who we are and therefore allowing social media platforms and users to define us according to the dictates of their reasoning.

Among many other reasons, we all appreciate and enjoy social media because humans were created for social interactions. I daresay that social media is *one of the best inventions of our time for social connectedness*. It is also important to note that it can become a platform for social isolation, depending on what we are doing and why we are using the platforms. This *makes its essence, at the very core, counterproductive*.

## HUMAN INTERACTIONS

*“Human connection is an energy exchange between people who are paying attention to one another. It has the power to deepen the moment, inspire change and build trust.” — Donna Pisacano*

Brown (In her article, [The power of human connection](#))

Human connection is an inborn desire—a need, actually! A need to create social relationships with others. It is important for our well-being. Human connection is a coping mechanism. Our ability to cope with the normal stress of life is a sign of our mental state. WHO defined mental health as *“a state of well-being in which an individual can realize his or her own potential, cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively, and make contributions to the community.”*

When humans connect, *it’s magical*. It creates an ecosystem for true and lasting support structures. No man or woman was created as a stand-alone, nor can anyone flourish or thrive isolated to themselves. They say no man is an island of himself. This is true. We exist as over 7.8 billion people for a reason: we are social beings, and interactions fuel our existence. They give us a sense of community that is important to our mental health.

While face-to-face **interactions**, including *nonverbal communication* such as body language, *facial expressions, gestures*, and voice tone *in addition to the words that are spoken*, **are** the best form of

communication, the need to communicate (*text, audio, visual*) through social media cannot be overemphasized. This is why it is important for each of us to gauge how our mental health in relation to our social media usage. It must be stated that digital interactions alone cannot be compared to physical interactions, as we are mostly responding to digital interactions by assumptions—hoping a person felt a certain way by the nature and context of the conversation, especially since most people prefer chatting over instant messaging, calls and video messaging apps.

We know that human interaction and relationships are important in the digital age, especially because technology is often designed to **mimic our physical experiences** *with the invention of audio platforms like Clubhouse and video platforms like Zoom*. However, the danger is in this question: *are our interactions via these platforms genuine, honest, and a true reflection of the strength of our identity and who we want to be?* When we call people digital friends, can they stand in for us when it really counts? Of course, the answer to this is both yes and no, depending on how you are using your platforms.

Since human connections are important for our health and well-being and the digital era is now a representation of most of our endeavours, we must engage in human interactions there too! What this means is that the digital space also has a lot to do with our health and well-being.

To enjoy digital expressions, we require resilience and an understating of self. *Do you know how physical rejection hurts? Well, digital rejection hurts, too!* Unlike in the real world, cowards can hide behind their keypads to become bullies and create an environment where a host of other factors can negatively impact our mental health and well-being like in the real world.

As I earlier mentioned, the goal of technology is not to replace human interactions but to help facilitate them. Once a person has a personal identity, it becomes easy for him to transfer it into his digital identity. Identity gives you a choice. It avails you the opportunity to trust and be trusted—and trust is an all-important currency both in the physical and digital world. If you do not have this, the chances of lying and pretending, especially in an atmosphere of social comparisons, become very high. Your value is tied to who you are, online and offline.

We are building a “quantity” of human interactions that are not of “quality” to us in the name of creating human interactions online.

A lot of people go online to escape their present realities, just as any addict would do with what he/she abuses to get a sense of self *for a moment*. Understanding who you are makes your online time intentional and deliberate. Whether it’s for fun or to work, you have the self-control and self-discipline to operate within that frame of mind. Digital maximalists do not have this discipline and self-control. If it catches their attention, then it must be meaningful to them. Every advert, every pop-up ad, and every new trend has to be checked. The process is called Digital Maximalism—*a philosophy of tech use that sees the potential benefit of using any technology*.<sup>1</sup>

I say these things about balance—*the intersection of technology and our health*—because no one really taught us structure, and some of us aren’t observant enough to notice these things as we journey on. We are building a “quantity” of human interactions that are not of “quality” to us in the name of creating human interactions online. A lot of us are busy but not productive, and we think that they are the same thing. This is largely because we did not sort out our personal identities before creating digital ones. Human interaction is extremely important, but it must have a structure to be valuable.

## SOCIAL MEDIA: THE BEAUTY & THE BEAST

Social media avails people, family, and friends the opportunity to stay in touch with each other in real-time in ways that could have never happened before. Social media is a communication channel that can create support structures in a magnitude beyond ordinary imagination.

There are many benefits of social media that we can list off the top of our heads. It allows people to meet new people, thereby building new bonds, business transactions, relationships, and partnerships. It creates platforms to acquire knowledge, find an answer to problems, and seek help from professionals that will never stigmatize or judge them.

“Every new technology goes through a phase of euphoria, followed by a phase of retrenchment. Automobiles were a fantastic replacement for horses, but as their numbers increased, it became clear that they had their own health and cleanliness issues. The same is true of the Internet” — **Hal Varian, Chief Economist at Google**

In a world where many people just flow with the tides, and the possibilities within the digital space and especially social media are left unchecked, a lot of unintended affordances begin to manifest. While we just established that social media usage has many benefits, there are also many negative consequences.

The fear of missing out (FOMO), a common phenomenon affecting not just teenagers but almost everyone, is a situation where we always want to be in the know— nothing must pass us by, like an *“always on” culture*. This process leads to a concept called digital overload. A process **Dr. Tracy Asamoah** [defines](#) as what *“happens when you have trouble processing the amount of information you take in online, leading you to feel distracted, anxious, fatigued, or even depressed.”*

Social media and the technological space aren't supposed to feel this way. Instead, we should be building digital minimalism—a *philosophy of technology use in which you focus your online time on a small number of carefully selected and optimized activities that strongly support things you value and then happily miss out on everything else.*<sup>1</sup> So, simply put, the hack for fighting FOMO is JOMO (the Joy Of Missing Out). To ensure that your mental health is protected, you must ensure that you are only intentionally consuming information that is relevant to who you are and aligns with your value structure. Again, this is one of the reasons why we must first know the things that we value.

Another challenge that usage of social media can pose is that the lack of real connections defeats the purpose of trying to build digital connections. Even worse, we often neglect our face-to-face interactions because of our digital connections and activities. What this means is that we lose that sense of companionship which can lead us to feelings of loneliness, stress, anxiety, and a general inability to cope with things that were initially within our control. This is dangerous for our health and well-being. To avoid this, we need to be deliberate about the connections we are making. No matter how beautiful our digital interactions are, we must never use them to replace face-to-face interactions and non-tech activities.

Social media illusion is another factor that could negatively impact our mental health. Considering that we perceive things based on our interpretation of life, we can sometimes fall into the illusion trap. This is often motivated by a need to keep up with appearances. A lot of people live and lead a fake life—flaunting an appearance of success that they are not because society, to a large extent, celebrates materialism. **On the other hand, there are many people who are truly successful, and a few of them show-off the reward of their hard work.** This is perfectly fine!

The problem here is that we often spend a lot of time on social media worried about how others succeed and how we haven't achieved anything yet, as though anybody's success is the reason we are not YET



successful, or that other people being successful means we will not be. This kind of thinking is a breeding ground for mental health problems.

Whenever you notice that you are beginning to have disempowering thoughts towards anything that has to do with someone else's success, just know that you are looking at yourself from the wrong perspective, and this could explain why (*if*) you are unhappy. There are many other negative consequences streaming from a lack of complete understanding of who we are and wielding power to society for what should and should not make us happy.

“If you are always trying to be normal, you will never know how amazing you can be” — **Maya Angelou.**

# Conclusion

Of all the quotes used in this book, this one hit me the most - *“the price of anything is the amount of life you exchange for it.”* - **Henry David Thoreau**. Efficiency and productivity must never come at the expense of what makes us human. Technology exists for humans, and so, humans must exist.

As was stated earlier, *“...on one part, technology is the best traction ever, and on the other hand, we can let it become a great distraction.”* The power for digital balance and healthy living is in your hands. What are you going to do with it?

“And in the end, it's not the years in your life that count;  
it's the life in your years.” — **Abraham Lincoln**



# Bonus: The ‘No Gadget Hangout’

## The No Gadget Hangout!!!

### **Event Planning Guide**

*Tips and tools for balancing our attention with our intention and creating an environment that supports them. Dr. Shauna Shapiro frames and explains it as the IAA model of mindfulness: Intention, Attention, and Attitude.*

## **Oluwatosin Olabode**

## INTRODUCTION

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The No Gadget Hangout (NGH) is a project designed by *Doing Healthy Africa* to help us keep our attention on our intentions. It offers guides for setting up individual and collective gadget-free hangouts for improved human interactions and digital well-being.

## CONTEXTUAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

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- EVENT:** Any activity that is done within a period.
- GADGET:** Any technological device (*phones, camera, laptop, etc.*) that can be used for social interactions and communication.
- HANGOUT:** A place of specific meeting of whatever nature. It could be an individual or a collective location. It could also be at a favourite spot or a mutually agreed venue.

## CONCEPT OVERVIEW

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In a world governed by the attention economy, the *No Gadget Hangout* is a concept designed to remind us of the importance of human interactions—*being present and savouring the moments in those interactions*. It is a digital wellness strategy that seeks to turn our focus toward human values and reminds us of what it means to be human in the ever-evolving digital era.

## OBJECTIVES

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1. Reconnect humanity and rebuild human interactions.
2. Focus our intention with our attention.
3. Enjoying quality time without digital distractions.

## STRUCTURE

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### HANGOUT TYPE

Decide if this is a personal journey or something you would like to do with others around you, *including strangers*.

### PARTICIPATION FORMAT

1. **INDIVIDUAL:** Spending quality time with one's self
2. **COUPLE/FAMILY:** Spending quality time with family members or your significant other
3. **FRIENDS:** Spending quality time with friends
4. **WORK:** When on duty—if your work permits, stay off your device or off non-work-related apps. When on vacation—staying off work emails and office-related matters.
5. **EDUCATIONAL (STRANGERS & FRIENDS):** Getting to meet new people and form new bonds through quality hangouts. This will require an open call for people to attend your designed hangout.

## APPROACH

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### EVENT-BASED- PERSONAL

1. Take advantage of non-technological activities to bond with oneself or others, thereby building more face-to-face interactions without the presence of digital distractions getting in the way, while also reducing screen time. This could include:
  - Daily family times—these are the periods where or when certain activities or conversations are happening as a family, for example:
    - Eating periods
    - Playing with the kids

### Bonus: The ‘No Gadget Hangout’

- When everyone is sitting together in the living room
  - Family game night
  - Walking the dogs and others as listed in the participation format (*me time, bonding with friends, work time*).
2. Take advantage of activities that can often be done without the use of technology. For instance:
- Going to the stores occasionally rather than always ordering online
  - Instead of always ordering in, try eating at a restaurant.
  - Reading hard-copy books instead of always reading e-books
  - The list is endless—the idea is not to stop using technology, but to appreciate and explore nature in its raw form... occasionally.

## ORGANIZING EDUCATIONAL EVENTS

1. When the context is right—and your calendars are in sync. It could be during the week (we recommend weekends), during holidays, or at a mutually agreed-upon time. Here are a few examples: Digital Wellness Day (May 5, 2023) or National Unplugging Day (1<sup>st</sup> Friday in March annually)
2. All other “No Gadget Hangouts” as listed in the participation format.

## DURATION

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Hangouts can be scheduled for as long as the activity permits, the participants’ availability, and convenience. For instance, it could last through a meal, bonding, or work times, etc.

## CHOOSING A LOCATION

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The kind of Hangout being planned will influence the choice of location. We generally recommend as follows:

- **General Hangouts:** both indoor and outdoor spaces depending on the kind of activity involved. For example, our homes are good for most family-related activities.
- **Educational Hangouts:** outdoor spaces, preferably one in nature-friendly environments like parks and gardens.

Kindly note that these recommendations are flexible and should accommodate the organizer(s) and participant(s) comfort and preferences, especially for Educational Hangout.

## DOCUMENTATION

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Documentation is essential for storytelling because it allows others to work toward their own digital life balance. To avoid defeating the purpose by having a digital device present, you can use hard-copy diaries and/or journals to document.

This is especially good for taking note of how you feel over time and if you are gradually getting better at focusing your attention on your intention. If you want to keep us updated about your experience, you can tag us on Instagram [@livingdigitallywell](https://www.instagram.com/livingdigitallywell) or send us a mail at [info@oluwatosinolabode.com](mailto:info@oluwatosinolabode.com).

We recommend having a dedicated book handy.

If you want to keep us updated about your experience, tag us on Twitter [@livingdigitallywell](https://twitter.com/livingdigitallywell) or email [info@oluwatosinolabode.com](mailto:info@oluwatosinolabode.com).

## ESSENCE

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We host these gatherings almost every day in one form or the other. The difference, however, is that this time we would be doing them



without the presence of digital distractions. So, in conversations with others, for instance, we can avoid phubbing. While working, we can enjoy focus mode—simply paying attention to only what we are doing for the period in view—and generally improve our physical, mental, and psychological health. Our intentions should always meet our attention.

## GATE PASS/ACCESS FEE

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**YOUR DEVICE**—you can either leave it at home, submit it at the point of entry for Educational Hangouts, or put it on silence in your bag. For General Hangouts, keep it away from eye view or mandate every participant to keep their phones away.

Remember the concept of mere presence that we spoke about—*the phenomenon that simply the presence of one’s phone can impact the perceived quality of conversations or cognitive performance*<sup>1</sup>. Our goal with keeping devices away during the No Gadget Hangouts is to ensure we build a culture merging our intentions with our attention.

### NOTE:

1. Digital wellness is not about abandoning technology but rather about building balance and healthy habits for an easier life and better productivity.
2. The No Gadget Hangout is not always applicable to first responders or emergency workers in general, but the beauty is that when they do have breaks, like vacations, they are sure to unplug.
3. There is no one-size-fits-all: this is designed as a template to guide our digital usage for balance. Kindly contact us for further references and context.

## WHO CAN GET INVOLVED

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- Anyone with access to a digital device.
- Anyone intending to build healthier digital habits.
- Everyone.

## TYPES OF ACTIVITIES

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Below are some activities you can use for our hangouts. They have been separated into General and Educational categories. Kindly note that these are just suggestions. If you have other ideas, you would like us to add, kindly shoot us a mail.

### ACTIVITIES FOR GENERAL HANGOUTS

- Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner (whenever you are eating).
- Personal activities like reading.
- When in conversations with friends and or family.
- When enjoying personal time.
- During Meditation

When in your room preparing to sleep.

We are all different, and so, there is no one-size-fits-all. Thus, this list might not work for everyone- the important thing is figuring out what works for you and then working it out.

### ACTIVITIES FOR EDUCATIONAL HANGOUTS

- Group cookouts
- Playgroup competitive games like board games.
- Hiking
- Swimming
- Dance-off,
- Karaoke

- Picnic
- Book readings,
- Bowling, etcetera.

## SPECIAL THANKS TO

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- **DOING HEALTHY AFRICA**

*Doing Healthy Africa helps young people build the stamina and technical know-how needed to thrive within the digital world.*

- **PROJECT BE**

*Project BE raises awareness about the growing dangers of media (influence & addiction) and inspires others to shift their habits to live happier healthier lives.*

# Supplemental Workbook

**Digitally well:**

*Structures and society in the  
Tech Era.*

**Oluwatosin Olabode**

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## NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

Living well digitally is no longer optional for us. It's essentially the only way to live. Whether we believe it or not, it is true. We need to learn how to manage the one entity that is always present, whether we are online or not: **ourselves.**

We can live lives where technology serves us rather than us serving it if we have a better understanding of who we are, our vision, and our intention.

This book helps to put technology and humanity back into the right relationship and to give the reader actionable tools, tips, and hacks to shape their usage of technology to match their personal goals and intentions and to avoid "drifting."

This is because drifting for instance can begin to have an effect on our emotional and psychological well-being, causing FOMO (fear of missing out), anxiety, and prolonged sadness, which mostly led to depression (from waiting and wanting to feel among and or 'live the life'), a lack of defined identities, and misplaced priorities such as wanting to be

accepted before accepting ourselves, as explained in the book.

This is important to note considering how little we can do without technology! In our generation, digital wellness has become a necessity. This supplemental workbook is a toolkit designed to help readers begin the process of putting everything they've learned in the book into action.

“Moving forward, no digital and/or wellness conversations can ever be complete without a conversation on digital wellness. Thus, this book is for anyone looking for balance: on one part, technology is the best traction ever, and on the other hand, we can let it become a great distraction.”

**Oluwatosin Olabode**

[Oluwatosinolabode.com](http://Oluwatosinolabode.com)

*The journey to Living Digitally Well begins with you.*



## Supplemental Workbook

## CHAPTER ONE: IDENTITY

Knowing who we are is the single most important aspect of navigating our lives and the world we now live in. Many people look to others for clues about who they are, but this is not the best approach. We discussed the concept of identity as it relates to technology in chapter one; please read it before proceeding with these action points and activities.

### **Exercise:**

1. Do you know who you are (Whether your response is yes or no, explain why below)?

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*Answer the following questions using the mind mapping strategy described in this chapter (Page 23):*

**Mind Mapping Activity:**

2. Who are you?

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3. 3. What is the most important thing in your life, in your opinion?

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4. What values is the world getting through you?

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5. What reputation are you building?

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6. 6. What will be your legacy?

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7. What two original intentions did you have for your life that you have drifted from- what are you going to do about it?

a

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b

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8. Write out your vision statement using guidance from the book.

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9. Write out your mission statement using guidance from the book.

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10. What are your core values?

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11. What are your top 3 expressions?

a

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b

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c

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12. What are two signs that you have a positive relationship with yourself and others as you navigate technology?

a

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b

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13. What are some distractions you know are preventing you from making the best use of your time?

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14. Does your use of technology reflect your goals and identity? If yes/no, what are you going to do about it?

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## Supplemental Workbook

## CHAPTER TWO: DIGITALLY WELL

Living well digitally is no longer an option in today's world. It has become a requirement! We discussed the concept of living digitally well in chapter two; please read it before proceeding with these action points and activities.

Exercise:

1. What does it mean to you to live digitally well (Make a list of all the ways you can imagine a digitally well-lived life)?

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2. In the first exercise, you identified what living digitally well means to you. What is one thing you did today that aligned with your goal of living digitally well?

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3. Based on your newfound knowledge, what are three actionable steps you can START taking today to live digitally well?

a

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b

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c

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4. Based on your newfound knowledge, what are three things you can STOP doing right now to live a more digitally healthy life?

a

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b

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c

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5. On a scale of 1 to 10, is technology serving you or are you serving technology (1 means you are serving technology and 10 means technology is serving you)?

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

6. In addition to the NYT Study shared in this chapter, what are your three motivations for sharing online?

a

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b

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c

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7. What are three ways you can be more deliberate with your online time? (This is to ensure that technology is actually serving you).

a

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b

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c

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8. Are my digital intentions promoting my optimal health and productivity, or are they affecting it in some way?

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9. Am I in control of my digital life or does my digital life control me- what are you going to do about your response to this question? (This is an action step for your response to question 5)

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**Activity:**

Use the next seven days to monitor how many hours you spend online-

Within your Android or IOS phone is a feature called Digital Well-being and Screen Time respectively. This feature can be found in the settings of your phone when you scroll

down and search for the name as stated above. Once you open that feature, amongst many other things, it will tell you the amount of time you have spent on your device and the allocation of that time. For this activity that you are about to embark on, using the information above, here's how to go about it.

- At the end of each day, choose a specific timeframe (preferably when you activate your sleep routine in the night) to check the amount of time you spent that day.
- Come back to this workbook and record the hours you spent in the space below, noting the top three apps you spent the most time in.
- Then evaluate whether those top three apps align with your identity and goals for living digitally well.
- Repeat this process seven times in a row (or for as long as you want). As you continue on your path to living well digitally.

Day 1

Time:

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Observation and Evaluation:

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Day 2

Time:

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Observation and Evaluation:

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Day 3

Time:

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Observation and Evaluation:

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Day 4



Time:

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Observation and Evaluation:

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Day 5

Time:

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Observation and Evaluation:

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Day 6

Time:

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Observation and Evaluation:

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Day 7

Time:

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Observation and Evaluation:

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## Supplemental Workbook

### CHAPTER THREE: INTENTIONS AND ATTENTION

As Gary Keller rightly said, “You can do two things at once, but you can’t focus effectively on two things at once.” In chapter three, we explored the concept of Intention and Attention Management, be sure to read it before attending to these action points and activities.

Exercise:

1. Why are you online?

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2. What do your online presences say about you?  
(Does it agree with your statement above about why you are online?)

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3. Given the above, what steps can I take to ensure that I am achieving what I intend to achieve?

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4. How good are you at multitasking on a scale of 1 to 10? (1 indicating poor multitasking ability, and 10 indicating exceptional multitasking ability)

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

5. Is it important to you what kind of result you get, especially when multitasking, or are you content with just getting a result? (As in our book's parent-child illustration)

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6. Are you a phubber? How do you feel when people are phubbing around you?

a

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b

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**Monitoring and Evaluation:**

7. How many hours of sleep can you get right now (given your night-time tech usage)?

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8. How many hours of sleep do you desire?

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9. What is your sleep schedule like? What do you need to do to reach the above-mentioned number of hours, particularly in terms of your tech usage?

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10. How do you feel after a good night's sleep?

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## CHAPTER FOUR: ENVIRONMENT

More than we like to admit, the way we build our environments and the environments in which we constantly find ourselves shape our actions and in-actions. We discussed the concept of Environment in Chapter 3; please read it before proceeding with these action points and activities.

Exercise:

1. Where is your phone going to sleep tonight?  
(Remember, this is based on your goals and intentions, as explained in the book).

In your hands, and or on your body?

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On your bed?

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In your room?

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In a different room, and or place that is not easily accessible to you?

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2. When do you go to bed (do you have a sleep schedule)?

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3. When does your phone go to sleep (does it have a wind-down routine)?

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**Monitoring and Evaluation:**

4. Do you join all social media platforms as they are released, or are you selective about which ones you use?

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5. Do you read the privacy policies of the platforms with which you interact?

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6. Are you deliberate about your “feed management”- the digital connections you engage with?

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7. Do you take your online privacy seriously (will the content you publish agree with your answer to this question)?

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8. What are two things you can do right now to protect your online privacy?

a

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b

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9. Are you familiar with the features available in your device's settings?

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10. Are you kind and empathetic online?

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11. Do you review the platforms you use on a regular basis to ensure that they still align with your vision, goals, and objectives?

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12. Are you able to easily digitally detox yourself from platforms and/or apps when you feel overwhelmed?

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13. Do you have control over your notifications (Check only when you want to, not whenever it pops-up)?

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14. Are you able to keep tech away from your non-tech activities?

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15. Are you able to take breaks?

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16. Do you have the ability to take screen breaks?

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17. What are some alternative activities you can do to replace looking at another screen when taking breaks from screens?

## CHAPTER FIVE: SOCIAL MEDIA AND MENTAL HEALTH

There are numerous factors to consider in the context of social media and mental health, some of which are within our control and others that are not. This is one of the reasons why how we use social media can have an impact on our mental health, both positively and negatively. This is also why we must use social media in a balanced manner that promotes and protects our mental health as well as the mental health of those around us. We discussed the concept of Social Media and Mental Health in Chapter 3, so please read it before proceeding with these action points and activities.

Exercise:

1. How does your social media use impact your mental health and well-being?

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1. When considering the relationship between your social media use and mental health, what factors act as indicators to know if you are still aligned with your essence (an example of some factors are; peace of mind, value, friendliness, stability, etc.).

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2. Do you believe social media can cause problems for people?

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3. Do you believe social media (alone) is to blame for these issues, or do humans play a role?

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4. Do you still have face-to-face interactions with your friends and family?

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5. Is your use of social media a true reflection of your identity and who you want to be?

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6. Do you have any online friends who can help you out when you need it the most?

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7. Do you have offline friends who can help you out when you need it the most?

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8. Is technology in your life replacing human connections or facilitating more human connections and relationships?

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9. What are three ways you can use social media to promote and protect your own and others' mental health?

a

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**b**

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**c**

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## Supplemental Workbook

BONUS

1. What is your digital wellness goal?

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2. What three things can you do in the morning to get a little closer to achieving this goal?

a

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b

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c

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3. What three things can you do in the afternoon to get a little closer to achieving this goal?

a

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b

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c

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4. What three things can you do in the evening to get a little closer to achieving this goal?

a

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b

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c

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# Conclusion:

Living digitally well has to be a way of life in today's world. A way of life that encourages us to improve our relationship with technology.

This workbook was essential in ensuring that we had a path to begin implementing everything discussed in the Digitally Well book.

It provides you with actionable tools and tips to help you on your journey to Digital Flourishing®.

# Notes

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## SCHEDULE A FREE 15-MINUTES CONSULTATION



There are many concepts in this book that were summarized because our outlet was pen and paper. If you have questions or this book has sparked a need for digital balance in your life, and you would like to engage me in further conversation, you are in luck; buying this book grants you a free 15-minute consultation during which I will be happy to answer any questions you might have.

Click [HERE](#) to schedule your free 15 minutes call. Or send an email to [booking@oluwatosinolabode.com](mailto:booking@oluwatosinolabode.com)

Love this book? If yes, don't forget to leave a review! Kindly head over to wherever you purchased this book to leave an honest review. Every review matters a lot to me! I thank you in advance for your kindness.

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## Other Projects by Author

1. [Living Digitally Well Newsletter](#)
2. [Living Digitally Well Instagram Curation Page](#)
3. [Living Digitally Well Vlog & Blog](#)
4. [Living Digitally Well Monthly Challenge](#)
5. [Living Digitally Well Courses](#)

Are you wondering why people are not living digitally well?

Find more tools and resources by visiting,

[Oluwatosinolabode.com](http://Oluwatosinolabode.com)

# About Author

Oluwatosin Olabode, Executive Director at Doing Healthy Africa, author of 8 books, and 2-time TEDx and international speaker, is Africa's first Certified Digital Wellness Educator.

He is an alumnus of the Digital Wellness Institute (USA), an African Ambassador for Digital Wellness Day, a Barack Obama's Young African Leader Initiative Fellow, a Tech Advisor for the American Based Musical, The StartUp, which uses theater to expatiate on digital wellness principles, a Guest Professional with Art & Tech for a Better World (Argentina), and a Wealth of Positive Energy!

He is a changemaker at the intersection of both the physical and digital world, facilitating ecosystems that promote more humane digital habits geared towards digital flourishing, and was nominated to speak on a highly sought-after panel for Digital Wellness Day- reaching over 7 million people in 36 countries in 2022. He is passionate about responsible tech usage and has completed the Foundations of Humane Tech Course by the Center for Humane Technology, USA.

As a digital wellness educator, he helps individuals discover the essential skills they need to become digitally well in this fast-paced and ever-evolving digital world by showing them how to identify and stay true to their authentic selves, set boundaries that support their "intention and attention," minimize distractions while amplifying "traction", and use social media to enhance their mental well-being.

Understanding the unique challenges and opportunities that come with our increasingly connected world, he offers a range of services, including coaching, consulting, and training, in addition to his books, to help clients live digitally well. Whether you're looking to improve your personal digital habits or create a healthier workplace culture, He can help you achieve your goals.

He has spoken on numerous platforms both locally and internationally, including: but not limited to: Youth 4 Youth Summit- Virtual, Concord, Massachusetts (2020/2021), Happiness Festive- Virtual (Germany), Uniting to Prevent Suicide in Africa- Virtual- A Pan African Event, Humanitech- Virtual, New York, African Suicide Prevention Summit- Virtual, Africa, Dr. Lulu's Stop Suicide Summit- Virtual, San Antonio Texas, TEDxUniJos- Plateau State, TEDx Gwallemeji- Bauchi, True Colours Outreach Bassa, Plateau State University ECWA Chapel Bokkos, ECWA Church Wuse 2, Abuja.

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