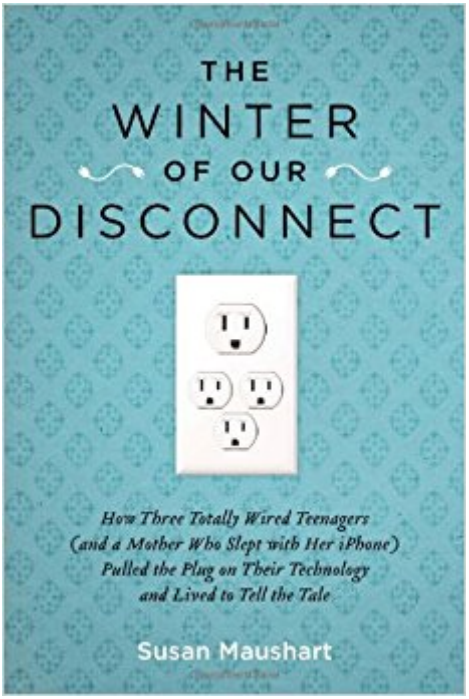
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The Winter Of Our Disconnect: How Three Totally Wired Teenagers (and A Mother Who Slept With Her IPhone)Pulled The Plug On Their Technology And Lived To Tell The Tale



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Synopsis

The wise and hilarious story of a family who discovered that having fewer tools to communicate with led them to actually communicate more. When Susan Maushart first announced her intention to pull the plug on her family's entire armory of electronic weaponry for six months-from the itsy-bitsiest iPod Shuffle to her son's seriously souped-up gaming PC-her three kids didn't blink an eye. Says Maushart: "Looking back, I can understand why. They didn't hear me." For any parent who's ever IM-ed their child to the dinner table, this account of one family's self-imposed exile from the Information Age will leave you LOLing with recognition. But it will also make you think. The Winter of Our Disconnect challenges readers to examine the toll that technology is taking on their own family connections, and to create a media ecology that instead encourages kids-and parents-to thrive. Indeed, as a self-confessed single mom who "slept with her iPhone," Maushart knew her family's exile from Cyburbia wasn't going to be any easier for her than for her three teenagers, ages fourteen, fifteen, and eighteen. Yet they all soon discovered that the rewards of becoming "unplugged" were more rich and varied than any cyber reality could ever be.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Maushart (The Mask of Motherhood) embarked with her three teenagers on a six-month screen blackout (no cellphones, iPods, PCs, laptops, game stations, or television) to discover if the technology intended to stimulate and keep us virtually more connected was, as she suspected, making us actually more disconnected and distracted. Ironically, Maushart may have gone

screen-dark, but her writing remains riddled with "textspeak"--"LOLs," "WTFs," emoticons--and exhausting chipperness and self-conscious "hipness," which all distract from an otherwise intelligent and eloquent core text. Funny and poignant precisely when it is not trying to be, this book vacillates between diary entries (written longhand) and deeply researched reportage, which brings needed balance to the subject of new media, often touted as either the answer to all of our problems or the accelerant of societal doom. What Maushart's experiment uncovers is a commonsense conclusion: in a world of proliferating demands on our attention, exercising the on/off switch is the ultimate practice in understanding connection. (Jan.) (c) Copyright PWxyz, LLC. All rights reserved.

Australian journalist and single parent Maushart reports on her familyÃ¢â ¬â„¢s decision to take a figurative six-month voyage into an unplugged lifeÃ¢â ¬â •easier said than done when your family consists of three teenagers! No wonder she describes the Ã¢â ¬Å“voyageÃ¢â ¬Â• as The Caine Mutiny, with her playing Captain Queeg. As it happens, the voyage is relatively storm free, though there are some squalls at the beginning. Maushart nearly goes through withdrawal after turning off her iPhone and finds that her work takes twice as long without a computer. In a way, the kids are more adaptable (perhaps because their mother offers them various bribes). They quickly learn how to do homework without access to Wikipedia and discover such joys as playing the saxophone and having sing-alongs. Interspersed with the familyÃ¢â ¬â„¢s experience is a great deal of timely information about the impact of electronic technology on Generation M (8- to 18-year-olds), and not all of it is pretty. Nevertheless, the entire family is relieved when the experiment is over but delighted to discover that it has introduced them to Ã¢â ¬Ëœlife itself.Ã¢â ¬â„¢ --Michael Cart

First of all let me start by saying that I didn't choose to read this book. It was assigned for my English class although I don't regret it, and actually found it to the most part interesting. Its about the author, a single mother of 3 media technology dependent teenagers living in Perth, Australia that decides to do a 6 month media technology free experiment. Which meant no one in the house could use any tech gadget like computers, iPods, cellphones etc. I found the book very interesting because as a media technology addict I could relate to what she said and even though I am not using media technology any less than I was using it before reading the book, at least now I know more about the subject of media technology; how it affects our lives, how it helps us and just more conscious about its use. If you feel you use media technology like Facebook, twitter or any other you should definitely read this book and learn from it because as media natives we sometimes don't tend to realize the effects this has on our lives, and don't worry this book wont make you stop using

them it will just make you more conscious of its use. This is a very well researched book. I didn’t love her writing style and found it confusing sometimes but its definitely not as bad as some other reviewers say. If you really want to know more about media technology in todays life with interesting details, examples and even better with a detailed 6 month experiment of how it is to live without it, than this is the book for you and I am sure you will enjoy and learn from it.

I really liked this book. I liked the idea of it and the telling of the story. It really made me think about how we use technology and how it keeps us separated even though we might all be in the same room or house. It helped me shape my guidelines for my kids of how and when computers and cell phones are used.

Last night I finished The Winter of Our Disconnect by Susan Maushart, just in time to count in my February list of books read. This was also the first one I read on my kindle, which I found a bit ironic since as Maushart and her family shed their technology for six months, I used my technology to read about it.Maushart chronicles the six months that she and her three teenage children - one son and two daughters- went unplugged. In addition to some of the events in these six months Maushart also includes a great deal of research about technology and how it has changed our world- not always for the better. This was the first time I used the bookmark feature on my kindle for many different passages - and will now have to practice how to retrieve them.Maushart shares facts about several different school districts who have cut their technology budgets after looking at data showing that technology did nothing to bolster test scores. As an educator this seems like a no-brainer to me. It is also something my colleagues and I have discussed at different times. Yes, technology is wonderful (when it works) but when students still are unable to add or multiply, that "stuff" is irrelevant. I truly believe that students who have a good foundation - who are teachable- will be able to quickly pick up the technology aspect of things even if they may have been introduced to technology later in their education than some others. So, reading Maushart’s evidence of this just reinforced my own views on the matter.Another interesting piece of information Maushart included is about autism. The incidence of autism is on the rise- now diagnosed in 1 of 58 children. Perhaps television viewing is somewhat responsible. Although no one knows exactly what triggers autism, one gentleman looked at the incidence of autism in rainy weather states where children spend more time indoors watching TV. In those states, there are more children diagnosed with autism. And while TV alone does not cause autism, perhaps those children with a predisposition for autistic behavior are triggered by time in front of the screen. At the very least, television viewing does nothing to

teach socialization skills, instead allowing children to, in fact, be more isolated. Yet another case for why not to have a television in children’s bedrooms!Maushart witnesses her own children doing things like reading and practicing the saxophone in their free time. She does admit that while one vice - their technology item of choice- is being taken away, another often presents itself. In the case of one daughter, instead of using Facebook or IMing she became almost attached to their landline, spending hours on the phone each day. Still, overall, Maushart witnessed her chidren spending more time talking to each other and becoming more connected as a family. And although Maushart calls herself a Digitial Immigrant - not having been born in the age of constant connectedness, she too suffers withdrawal from her different "toys," having to resort to handwriting all of her articles.My mother is also reading this book on her Kindle, and I am interested in hearing her thoughts on it when she finishes. While technology has many benefits, there are many ways in which life would be easier - and perhaps of a better quality- if we all unplugged for a little while.

informative with in-depth discussions of life without electronics.

It’s a good book, and a really interesting look at how we interact with technology. It makes a compelling case for taking some time to disconnect from our hyper connected lives, even if we don’t do it to such an extreme degree as the author did with her family.But what’s up with her and WALDEN? She references Thoreau and Walden, like, once every four or five pages throughout the entire book. I get it, it really resonates with you, and informs your own personal philosophy to what I can only imagine is a profound degree, but damn, lady, get a room, jeez. I like the book, and you should definitely read it, but wow. Wow.

How to let go all these gadgets we are so fond of? And what will happen if we do? The reading made me question: do I need all this distraction, all this time away from the real world? It made me try to find a balance between the real and virtual world. Not too many gadgets and online time in my house now. And it is much more fun, I can tell you.

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