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Adolescent Psychology

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<center>The App Generation</center>

Essay #2, #3, and #4: Discuss the disruptive nature of technology. What relationships are disrupted and how has this impacted the family.

Harvard Business School professor Clayton M. Christensen coined the term "disruptive technology". A disruptive technology is one that displaces an established technology and shakes up the industry or a ground-breaking product that creates a completely new industry. Before the Internet, whenever I heard the word "Amazon" I immediately referenced the river in South America. The idea of an online store was inconceivable. We had to go out to socialize. To do research, we met at the library to dig out our information from books. That was our Google. Also, we actually sat down and wrote letters (paper, pen, envelope, stamp, and time). The entire process would take days. No one could ever be sure the recipient received it let alone read it.

Then, on January 1, 1983, a disruptive technology called ARPANET adopted TCP/IP, and from there researchers began to assemble the "network of networks" that became the modern Internet. The online world then took on a more recognizable form in 1990, when computer scientist Tim Berners-Lee invented the World Wide Web. Today, families are more connected than ever thanks to cell phones, laptops, email, and instant messaging.

As a parent, grand parent, and great-grandparent, over time I've perceived that my babies are spending an exorbitant amount of screen time in various forms be it smartphones, television, computers, and video games, and/or ending checking and updating their social media (Facebook, YouTube, Pinterest, WhatsApp, Tik Tok, Messenger, Instagram, Twitter, and Snap Chat, and Tumblr). It disrupts the family because they are distracted. I am the velvet brick in my family. I do all I can to keep the social media wormhole from creeping up on my children and eroding their productivity.

The impact of social media is a powerful one. It robs families of attention, communication, and a feeling of safety within the family unit. My granddaughter, for example, feels that her mother is addicted to her cell phone. Technology can induce negative interaction, or zero interaction between siblings, couples, or parent-child. It starves the family of learning and modeling with each other social cues, interpersonal relationship skills, communication skills, and bonding. Social media strips us of our ability to hear and see verbal and nonverbal messages.

On the flip side, technology can be a useful tool to keep families connected. It helps us keep track of schedules, locations, and a sense of security between my babies because I can reach them or them me immediately if necessary. That's why I am working to increase quality family time with my family without technology. I set aside family time by cooking a huge meal and inviting as many as I can. We also have game nights. We start off with playing games. Then we get into some conversations that can lead to "intense moments of fellowship." One rule: no phones, TV, or computers allowed. God is teaching us to interact with each other face-to-face modeling healthy communication and interpersonal relationships.