



Be Emotionally Intelligent in Use of Technology

It is easy to get triggered in our technology-driven workplaces. Some people are intimidated by technology; others get lost in it. Keeping up with the flood of emails, texts, and social media challenges our emotional intelligence. Following are readings and technologies that support the mindful use of technology.

Reading/Video

The following readings discuss some of the common emotional triggers in using technology and ways to be more intentional and mindful. Some of them discuss how technology affects the brain.

Mindful.org has a section on [Mindfulness and Technology](#) offering articles that look at our relationship to technology, and how mindfulness helps us navigate our online worlds. See in particular:

- [“Mindful Social Networking”](#) offers tips for being mindful during screen time. Suggestions include limiting sessions, setting your intentions, and practicing appropriate speech.

The [Huffington Post](#) has run a number of blogs on mindfulness and technology. Check out:

- [“A Wisdom Manifesto for our Tech-Addicted Times”](#) In summary: 1) attention matters; 2) balance is key; consciously, not constantly connected; and 4) use the tools in ways that matter.
- [Meditation in Action: 5 Tips for Incorporating Mindfulness in a Tech Centric World](#). In summary: choose wisely, respond calmly, engage socially, breathe deeply, and communicate kindly.

[The Case for Wisdom in the Modern World](#): Video of Jack Kornfield giving keynote address at the 2012 Wisdom 2.0 Conference, a meeting where leaders from tech industry and the wisdom traditions share ideas. Kornfield talks about the need to marry wisdom and compassion with our great technological advancements. The video is 23 minutes long, and inspiring.

How does technology affect the brain? There is a lot being written about the impact of screen time on brain architecture, particularly child brain development. Here are a few items.

- The New York Times has a series called [“Your Brain on Computers”](#). Headlines include “Growing Up Digital, Wired for Distraction” and “Digital Devices Deprive Brain of Needed Downtime.”
- [Brain development in a hyper tech world](#): Briefing paper by the Dana Foundation raises cautionary flag about the impact of technology on child brain development.
- [Research out of UCLA](#) suggests that “A simple, everyday task like searching the Web appears to enhance brain circuitry in older adults.”
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Free Technology

There is a fair amount of technology being developed that supports basic mindfulness and self awareness, a key first step in developing emotional intelligence.

Meditation (or reminder) bells that you can use for meditation, or for periodic reminders to check in with yourself during the workday and take a deep breath.

- [Insight Timer](#): You can preset times for the bell to ring at different intervals. App for Droid or iOS.
- [Mindfulness Bells](#): You can preset times for bell to ring, with option for a random ring, desktop program.

Periodic email reminders/inspirational phrases

- [Mindful Interrupters](#) Provides short daily emails with suggestions to take a refreshing pause.
- [Focused Attention](#): This site has free resources, including weekly motivational action tips. (Not tested)

[Grateful160](#), one of several gratitude journal programs. This one emails or texts you and asks you to count your blessings. You reply with a short gratitude reflection. Each week you get an email summary. (not tested)

Technology to buy

[Meaning to Pause](#): Charm bracelet that gently vibrates every 60 to 90 minutes, reminding the wearer to pause and be grateful. (\$35-\$50/not tested)

[Awakening Joy app](#) for iPhone/iPad “helps you increase your well-being by guiding you through 95 exercises, letting you create fun inspirational posters with your own photos and sharing your experience with your friends.” (\$5.99, not tested)

[Happy Tapper apps](#) – Has a vision board app, a gratitude journal app, and “little Buddha” inspirational quotes app. (From i-tunes, 99 cents per app, untested)

[The Essential Meditations Deck app](#): A deck of 50 meditation cards with a guided meditation on each one. (Apple Store \$1.99 not tested)

Online Technology Tutorials

If you grew up in the pre-computer era and want pointers, the [Goodwill Community Foundation](#) offers online instruction on Facebook and Microsoft Office, as well as help learning [Social Media](#) like Twitter and LinkedIn.

Send in Your Suggestions!

I would love your help expanding the list of technology that supports mindfulness and ideas for using technology in mindful ways. If you have a tech tool that supports your emotional intelligence, please send a link and a short description of how it helps you. If you find an insightful article, drop me a note. I will keep updating this list. I appreciate any feedback you have. Send your comments and ideas to jean@insideoutcomes.biz

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