THE 30-DAY PRACTICAL GUIDE

The Attention Reset

A 30-Day Practical Guide to Calmer Screens, Deeper Focus and a Life Beyond the Scroll



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First Edition · 2026

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Edition: First Edition
Year of publication: 2026
Publisher: TOP CHOICE DIGITAL BOOK
Contact: excel.to.cad@gmail.com
Website: amazebazaar.com

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This book offers general guidance on everyday technology habits. It is not medical, psychological or therapeutic advice. If you are struggling with your mental health, sleep, or feel unable to control your use of technology, please speak to a qualified health professional.

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Contents

Introduction 6

1. Why Your Attention Feels Under Siege 9

2. How Attention Actually Works 14

3. Audit Your Own Habits 19

4. Redesign Your Phone 24

5. Taming Notifications, Email and Messaging 29

6. Feeds, Scrolling and Short Video 34

7. Deep Focus for Work and Study 39

8. Evenings, Sleep and Mornings 44

9. Boredom, Offline Joy and Better Replacements 49

10. Families, Friends and Shared Spaces 54

11. Staying on Track for the Long Term 59

Conclusion 64

Your 30-Day Action Plan 65

Appendix: Worksheets and Templates 68

Resources and References 71

About the Publisher 73

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Introduction

Somewhere in the last decade, a quiet shift happened. Our phones stopped being tools we picked up and became places we live. This book is about moving back out, gently and on your own terms.

You probably recognise the scene. You sit down to write a report, answer one message, and find yourself twenty minutes later reading about something you never intended to read. You go to bed with a plan to sleep early and look up to see it is well past midnight. You are at dinner with people you love and your hand drifts towards your pocket. None of this means something is wrong with you. It means you are a person with a brain, using products designed by teams who measure success partly in how much of your attention they can hold.

The good news is that attention is trainable, environments are changeable, and habits respond to design far better than they respond to guilt. You do not need a dramatic detox, a monk's retreat or a flip phone, although none of those is forbidden. What you need is a clear picture of your own patterns, a handful of well-chosen changes, and a simple structure for keeping them going when life gets busy.

What this book is, and what it is not

This is a practical guide. Every chapter ends with exercises you can do in a spare half hour, and the closing chapters pull everything into a 30-day plan. We lean on well-established ideas from psychology and habit design, and we are careful to say where evidence is strong, where it is mixed and where it is simply common sense that many people find helpful.

It is not a medical or therapeutic text. We do not diagnose conditions, and we do not claim that a particular change will fix anxiety, sleep problems or any other health concern. If your relationship with technology feels out of control, or if it is entangled with low mood, worry or other difficulties, a qualified health professional is the right person to talk to. The ideas here can sit alongside that support, but they are no replacement for it.

It is also not anti-technology. Screens connect us to family, give us access to knowledge that earlier generations could only dream of, and make countless daily tasks easier. The goal is not less technology for its own sake. The goal is *more intention*: choosing when, why and how you use your devices, so that the hours you spend on them are hours you would choose again.

The approach in one page

The method used throughout the book has four moves, easy to remember as **M.A.P.S.**

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Step	Name	What it means
M	Measure	Look honestly at your current habits before changing anything. You cannot improve what you have not observed.
A	Adjust	Change the environment: settings, layout, notifications and physical locations of devices, so good choices become the easy ones.
P	Practise	Build deliberate focus, rest and offline routines, one small habit at a time.
S	Sustain	Review regularly, forgive slips quickly and adapt the system as your life changes.

Chapters 1 and 2 give you the background. Chapter 3 is the Measure step. Chapters 4 to 6 are the Adjust step, covering your phone, your notifications and your feeds. Chapters 7 to 10 are the Practise step, applied to work, sleep, leisure and relationships. Chapter 11 is Sustain. After the conclusion you will find a 30-day action plan and an appendix of printable worksheets.

How to read this book

You can read straight through, which we recommend the first time, or dip into the chapter that matches your biggest pain point. Throughout, you will find a few recurring features:

- **Tip boxes** with small, quick ideas.
- **Case studies** that show how a change plays out in an ordinary life. These are illustrative composite examples written for this book, not accounts of real individuals.
- **Step-by-step guides** for the practical set-up tasks.
- **Checklists** you can copy onto paper.
- **Key takeaways** at the end of every chapter.

> **★ BEFORE YOU BEGIN**
>
> Grab a notebook or open a notes file and title it "My Attention Reset". Everything you write in the exercises will live there. Paper is ideal because it will not buzz at you while you use it.

> *You do not need more willpower. You need a better setup, a clearer purpose and a kinder way of talking to yourself when things slip.*

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A word on mindset. Many people start this kind of project with a rush of enthusiasm and a long list of rules, then abandon everything the first time they slip. We will do the opposite. Small, specific, reversible experiments beat grand declarations. If a change does not suit your life, you drop it without drama and try another. Think of yourself as the scientist and the subject of a friendly study on how you focus best.

Ready? Let us begin by understanding what you are up against, because once you see it clearly, much of the guilt falls away.

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CHAPTER

01

Why Your Attention Feels Under Siege

The forces competing for your focus, and why willpower alone is not a fair fight



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If your attention feels harder to manage than it used to be, you are not imagining it, and you are not alone. The environment in which we think has changed faster than our habits have.

A short history of competing for your eyes

Attention has always been valuable. Town criers, printed newspapers, billboards, radio jingles and television commercials all fought for it. What is different today is the combination of three things: devices that are always with us, content that is endless, and systems that learn what holds each individual person's interest.

A newspaper ends. A television programme ends. Even a long novel has a last page. A modern feed has no last page. It refreshes, extends and personalises itself, so there is rarely a natural moment at which the experience says "that is enough". When an activity offers no ending, the decision to stop falls entirely on you, and it must be taken again and again, often when you are tired.

The attention economy, in plain terms

Many popular apps and websites are free to use because they earn money from advertising or from related data-driven services. In that model, the amount of time and engagement a product captures can be tied closely to its revenue. That does not make the people who build these products villains, and many of them care deeply about user wellbeing. It does mean that the default design choices in many products tend to favour more use rather than less. Recognising that incentive is empowering, because it explains why "I will just use it less" so often fails: the product is quietly working in the other direction.

> **! KEEP PERSPECTIVE**
>
> Not every app is a trap, and not every hour on a screen is wasted. Video calls with a distant relative, a language course, a map that gets you home, and a gripping documentary are all screen time you may value highly. This book targets *unintended* use, the kind you would not choose if you stopped to think.

Common design features that pull at us

Understanding a few common design patterns makes them easier to spot and resist. The list below describes general techniques widely discussed by designers and researchers. Individual products vary, and not every product uses every technique.

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