



MERVE LAPUS

Healthy Balance in a Digital World

Website: commonsense.org

Email: mlapus@commonsense.org

Blog: thedigitaldaddy.wordpress.com

Twitter: [@Molapus](https://twitter.com/Molapus)

A little bit about Merve

- Senior director for Common Sense Education.
- Focused on education outreach.

Why do we have such trouble maintaining balance?

- We have many different hats we need to wear in order to support those we work with.
- We want to be aware of their needs and actually, try to meet their diverse needs.
- We are constantly trying to be on top of everything, verifying what resources we have to give.
- We also have families and friends that it affects.
- We sometimes forget to apply what we are doing at work with our home life.

How can we balance screentime at work and home?

- So difficult to really identify how much screen time we have because it's so ubiquitous.
- The key is identifying the "sacred time".
 - Our last thoughts before we go to bed should be about our friends and our family, not our social feed or the last episode of our favorite show on Netflix.
- Rather than monitor our screentime, we should be identifying and monitoring our sacred time.

Where do we take the time to think about “me”?

- Build the time in and schedule it in (maybe even through a color-coded calendar).
- Just because you schedule it doesn't make it inauthentic.
- Make it sacred time and make it yours.
- Educators are so giving that they are constantly giving to others through interactions outside of the classroom, in their everyday life or on social media.
- You have to be ok with telling people that you cannot meet during your sacred “me time”. “Me time” allows us to do everything else.
- As administrators or supervisors, we can model that work/life balance and support their own “me time” and the need for them to take it.

“You cannot wear multiple hats if you don't have the headspace to fit them.”

How can we balance the use of technology in our life?

- Look at three factors, development, tools, and spaces.
 - Tools
 - What is the purpose?
 - What is the outcome of using this tool?
 - Spaces
 - For some kids, this virtual space is their only social space.
 - In terms of child development, wanting to be with their friends is completely normal.
 - The “free space” of just hanging out with friends is changing. Before it was out and about in the neighborhood. Now it's online and that is developmentally appropriate.
 - You have to be knowledgeable about the space and know that some spaces are created to make you stay there.
- Getting kids to understand how these tools work and how they can manage it themselves is key.
 - Teach kids how the tools work and ask them “what are you getting out of it?”
 - The superficial parts of social media like the “likes” and “hearts” and “thumbs up” are missing the mark of deeper relationships, however, they can have a profound effect on a user's mental state.
 - We are getting the opportunities to connect with people across the globe in ways we never were before and that can be positive or negative. It's all in how you use it.

- It's all about empowering our kids to understand and think about the tools and how they work. We have to teach them how to navigate these platforms and make good choices.
- It still all comes down to decision making, values, morals, and ethics.

What does Common Sense Media do?

- Rate. Educate. Advocate.
 - They rate media for families and educators to get an idea of what content they will be interacting with on a certain show, movie, game, app etc.
 - Common Sense Media has a full FREE K-12 curriculum available with a NEW version for this fall.
 - Advocacy looks at how we can affect policy and put kids first.

How do we model the behavior we want to see in our kids when it comes to technology and social media?

- Role model the behavior you want to see. We have to hold ourselves accountable to the same rules we put on our kids.
- If you truly value the sacred time and the limits on screen time then we need to model this behavior ourselves.
 - What kids get access to may change as children grow but the value put on family time and the need to be off of our screens should not.
- If we are asking kids to “disconnect” we need to transition to something else.
- Part of navigating those “gray areas” is modeling those “gray areas”.
 - We need to learn to pause for people. You can still do what you need but the people in your life deserve your attention so we need to make sure that we pause for people.

Resources:

- [CommonSense.org](https://www.commonsense.org)
 - [K-12 curriculum](#)
 - [Searchable reviews for parents](#)
 - [Advocacy](#)
- [Digital Minimalism by Cal Newport](#)

Related posts on the Ditch That Textbook blog:

- [15+ must have resources for teaching digital citizenship](#)
- [Teaching digital citizenship with picture story books](#) by Eleni Kyritsis