KESTON SCHOOL

MIND & EMOTIONS · FREE SAMPLE

Reset Your Screen Time

Take back your evenings from the phone without going offline

CHAPTER 1 + WORKBOOK SECTION

BEFORE YOU START

How to use this book

By the last page you will have a phone set up to serve you, a home for it in the evenings, a short menu of things you actually enjoy instead, and simple routines that keep your screen time where you want it for months.

1. Read one chapter at a time. Each one gives you a single idea and a single action.
2. Open the Reset Your Screen Time Workbook and complete the matching section while the chapter is fresh.
3. Do the “Try this” action within seven days. Reading changes what you know; the action changes what you do.
4. Finish with the checklist in chapter 12 and come back to it whenever you slip.

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CONTENTS

Reset Your Screen Time

01 Where the Evening Went 4

Your next step 9

01

CHAPTER 1

Where the Evening Went

Recognize the evening drift from one quick check into an hour of scrolling, and why quitting cold turkey rarely holds.

It is 8:40 p.m. The dishes are done, the day is finally over, and you sit down on the couch with a plan: answer one message, then read, or call your sister, or finally start that thing you keep meaning to start. You unlock the phone. The message takes thirty seconds. Then there is a notification from another app, a video someone shared, a headline, a feed that refreshes with something new every time you pull down.

You look up and it is 10:15. You did not decide to spend the evening this way. You did not even enjoy most of it. You just never found the moment to stop.

If that scene is familiar, this book is for you.

The evening drift

Most people who want to cut back on screen time are not addicted to anything dramatic. They have a phone that is useful all day long, and that same phone quietly takes over the hours when they are tired, unstructured and alone with their thoughts. Mornings and workdays have shape: meetings, school runs, deadlines. Evenings do not. And a tired brain in an unstructured hour will almost always pick the easiest thing within reach.

The pattern usually looks like this:

1. **A reasonable start.** You pick up the phone for a real reason: a message, the weather, a quick check.
2. **A sideways step.** Something else catches your eye on the way.
3. **The slide.** One item leads to the next, with nothing that says “this is a good place to stop.”
4. **The surfacing.** You notice the time, feel a bit flat, and either go to bed later than you meant to or keep scrolling because the evening already feels lost.

Notice what is missing from that list: a decision. Nobody sits down and says, “Tonight I will spend ninety minutes watching strangers’ videos.” The time is not chosen. It leaks.

Why going cold turkey rarely lasts

When people get fed up, they usually try one of three things.

The big delete. You remove every social app on a Sunday night, feeling proud. By Wednesday you need one of them for a group event, you reinstall it, and by Friday you are back where you started.

The detox weekend. Two days away from screens feel wonderful. Then Monday comes, the phone is still set up exactly the same way, and the old pattern returns within days.

Pure willpower. You promise yourself to "just use it less." That works well at 10 a.m. It works poorly at 9 p.m., after a long day, which is exactly when the problem happens.

All three approaches share the same flaw. They try to change your behavior while leaving everything around the behavior untouched: the notifications, the home screen, where the phone sleeps, what else there is to do on a tired evening. The setup that produced the habit stays in place, so the habit comes back.

> **Key idea:** You do not need less phone. You need less unplanned phone. The goal is to choose your screen time, not to eliminate it.

What this book covers, and what it does not

This is a practical book about everyday screen habits, mainly in the evening and at home. Over the next chapters you will:

- understand in plain terms why the phone is so hard to put down,
- see what the drift is actually costing you,
- learn one foundation principle: pick it up on purpose,
- use three tools: redesign your phone, give it a physical home, and fill the gap with something better,
- apply them to real situations like couples on the couch, kids at bedtime and endless streaming,
- handle the weeks when you slide back,
- and make the whole thing run on routines rather than effort.

This book does not ask you to go offline, give up social media forever or move to a cabin. Your phone stays useful. It also does not cover focused work and deep concentration on the job; that topic belongs to a different title. And it is not a treatment for compulsive or problematic use. If screens are seriously affecting your work, sleep, money or relationships and you cannot change it on your own, chapter 9 explains when it makes sense to talk to a doctor or a qualified mental health professional.

Try this: watch three evenings

Before changing anything, find out what is really happening. For the next three evenings, from the end of dinner until you go to sleep, keep a simple log. Use the matching page in your workbook or a note on paper, not on the phone.

Each time you pick up the phone, write down three things:

- **Time:** roughly when you picked it up.
- **Reason:** what you meant to do ("reply to Sam," "check tomorrow's weather," "no reason, just bored").
- **Result:** what you actually did and roughly how long it took.

Do not try to behave better while you log. The point is honest data, not a good score. Most phones also have a built-in screen time report; glance at it at the end of each evening and write down the total and your top three apps.

After the third evening, look at your notes for ten minutes and answer two questions. First, which pickups had a real reason, and which had none? Second, which one or two apps took most of the unplanned time? Circle them. You will come back to them in chapter 5.

Many people find the log surprising in a useful way. The total is often higher than they guessed, but the pattern is also narrower than they feared: one or two apps, one or two time windows, a handful of tired moments. That is good news. A narrow problem has a narrow fix.

Next, we look at why the phone pulls so hard in those moments, and why it is not a character flaw that you find it hard to stop.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The problem is unplanned use, not phones themselves.
- Detox weekends and willpower fade because the setup never changes.
- Watching three ordinary evenings shows you where your time really goes.

→ Workbook, section 1

01 Where the Evening Went

Log three ordinary evenings, from the end of dinner until sleep. Honest data, not a good score.

FILL IN

Evening log - one row per pickup

Time	Reason	What I actually did	Minutes

FILL IN

Screen time report

Evening	Total time	Top 3 apps
Evening 1		
Evening 2		
Evening 3		

Pickups with a real reason vs. no reason - what do I notice?

The one or two apps that took most of my unplanned time (circle them):

YOUR NEXT STEP

Want the whole book?

You just read chapter 1 of Reset Your Screen Time and tried the first workbook section. The full e-book has 12 chapters, a complete workbook and a final checklist. Here is everything inside:

01 Where the Evening Went

02 Why the Phone Pulls

03 What the Scroll Costs

04 Pick It Up on Purpose

05 Redesign Your Phone

06 Give the Phone a Home

07 Fill the Gap

08 Screens in Real Life

09 When You Slide Back

10 Evenings on Autopilot

11 Attention Over the Years

12 Mistakes & Checklist

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