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Reclaiming Conversation: The Power Of Talk In A Digital Age



Reclaiming Conversation

The Power of Talk
in a Digital Age



Sherry Turkle

AUTHOR OF ALONE TOGETHER

READ BY KIRSTEN POTTER

UNABRIDGED



Synopsis

Renowned media scholar Sherry Turkle investigates how a flight from conversation undermines our relationships, creativity, and productivity - and why reclaiming face-to-face conversation can help us regain lost ground. We live in a technological universe in which we are always communicating. And yet we have sacrificed conversation for mere connection. Preeminent author and researcher Sherry Turkle has been studying digital culture for over 30 years. Long an enthusiast for its possibilities, here she investigates a troubling consequence: at work, at home, in politics, and in love, we find ways around conversation, tempted by the possibilities of a text or an email in which we don't have to look, listen, or reveal ourselves. We develop a taste for what mere connection offers. The dinner table falls silent as children compete with phones for their parents' attention. Friends learn strategies to keep conversations going when only a few people are looking up from their phones. At work we retreat to our screens although it is conversation at the water cooler that increases not only productivity but commitment to work. Online we want to share only opinions that our followers will agree with - a politics that shies away from the real conflicts and solutions of the public square. The case for conversation begins with the necessary conversations of solitude and self-reflection. They are endangered: These days, always connected, we see loneliness as a problem that technology should solve. Afraid of being alone, we rely on other people to give us a sense of ourselves, and our capacity for empathy and relationship suffers. We see the costs of the flight from conversation everywhere: Conversation is the cornerstone for democracy, and in business it is good for the bottom line. In the private sphere, it builds empathy, friendship, love, learning, and productivity. But there is good news: We are resilient. Conversation cures.

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Customer Reviews

I was all set to get into what looked like an intelligent read pertaining to the tech inundation of recent years. As with so many reads today, it all starts out so well, but once you approach the mid-section and beyond, it becomes a stuffed turkey: repetitive and rather shallow. The point is belabored and Turkle doesn't bravely come out with the bare truth: these phones that children are now on are addictive. Neuroscientists are clearly saying this. Ms. Turkle doesn't even go into this at all, yet she is describing withdrawals, anxiety attacks in usually young people when they are without their electronic drug, i.e.: phone. She just repeats her premise with unnecessary instances of the problem. We get it. My feeling for the scenarios she goes into where you have families preferring texting over real conversation where things get messy is that she's guilty of this herself, and also a tad addicted to her phone. What irks me about all this texting and phones, and such is the sheer inability for adults to set limits on their children and worse--themselves. The inability for schools to have policies on phone appropriateness is just another indication of the Boomer generation and their inability to set limits. I know there are private schools where phones are not permitted at all until after school, and it looks like this policy should be the rule--especially for the young ones. The fact that a school asks Ms. Turkle to help them figure out this problem with 'tweens lacking empathy, yet the school has no policy on setting limits with phones, is just dumb. When Turkle gets to the part where she offers possible remedies to this problem, it's weak, because of the sheer fact that she has no muscle, like many of her generation, to simply say: "O.K. Enough phone time. OFF".

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