Personal discussion: Phones and mindfulness

**Important tip #1:** Have fun! **Important tip #2:** Listen respectfully. **Tip #3:** It’s okay if you don’t have time to do ALL the questions.

# Discussion questions

1. How did you answer the three questions at the start of “Who’s Your Real Boss?” How did your answers compare with the author’s?

* How many times do you think you click, tap, and swipe the screen of your phone each day?
* How long does it take to refocus on a task after being interrupted?
* How happy are you when using the apps you use the most?

1. Kristian Sørensen states that having your phone within your field of vision actually reduces your IQ. Did this finding surprise you? Will you now hide your phone while doing schoolwork? Explain.
2. Do you ever use any of the apps mentioned in the article: *Quality Time* for Android and *Moment* for IOS to perform an audit of your smartphone use, or *Freedom*, which actively blocks specific apps or websites at specific time periods? If so, did you find these apps useful, and why? If not, would you consider using any of them?
3. Richard Davidson reveals that the average American adult spends 47% of her or his waking life not paying attention to what they're doing. Is it your experience to often have your mind on things not related to your present activity, such as a group discussion on Zoom? Explain.
4. Davidson goes on to explain that when people are not paying attention to what they're doing, they are significantly less happy, so a "wandering mind is an unhappy mind." Does this match your own experience? Explain.
5. Davidson says that 76% of middle-aged Americans have moderate to high levels of loneliness. Recent research shows that loneliness is actually a more significant predictor - by more than a twofold magnitude - of early mortality compared to obesity. Why do you think so many people in our society suffer from loneliness, compared to even just a few years ago?
6. Davidson reports that depression is on the rise. If you look at trends just over the last few years, what you see is a very large increase, particularly among women. Over the last three years alone, there's been a 33% increase in diagnoses of major depression in women. Why do you think more women than men suffer from depression?
7. What are the main ideas in Joey Schweitzer’s video? Remember, this is good practice for the exam next week. We’ll briefly go over this in class after the discussion.
8. Schweitzer’s key question is, ‘How much stimuli do we really want in our lives?’ He challenges us to make a list of more ordinary things like going for a walk or reading a book that can replace the urge for high-stimuli things like social media. If you were to make such a list, what things would you put on it? Brainstorm with your group for a couple of minutes.
9. Matt D’Avella suggests turning your screen to black and white to reduce the power your phone has over you. Why does this work? Would you do it?
10. He suggests deleting social media from your phone, forcing you to only access it on your desktop or laptop. Is that idea completely unthinkable for you, or would you consider it? Why?
11. Matt has friends that practice ‘screenless Saturdays’ in which they don’t look at any screens, even a GPS. Would you do this? What day of the week would you choose?