

WHY CAN'T I STOP LOOKING AT MY PHONE?

Dark patterns make it easier for tech billionaires to exploit you.

TECH IS DESIGNED FOR ADDICTION

Tech apps continuously enhance the can't-look-away qualities of their products. These features are often called "dark patterns."

Here are some examples:

- **Content prioritization** shows you high-engagement posts, especially ones likely to produce a strong reaction
- **Auto-play** makes it hard to turn away
- **Infinite scrolling** provides hours of unbroken content to peruse
- **Notifications** keep you opening the app

ANTI-SOCIAL MEDIA

These platforms do more than create **behavioral addiction**.

They also make it harder for us to maintain our **real-world relationships**. Our unconscious impulse to check our phones makes us ignore our in-person connections.

Plus, the engagement machine works best **when we fight with each other online**.

FEEL DISTRACTED, SAD, OR ANXIOUS AFTER SCREEN TIME?

Dopamine is known as the "feel-good" hormone. It helps you experience **pleasure**. The pleasure pathway of the brain is **co-located with the pain pathway** of the brain, and this pathway wants **balance**. Tech platforms are designed to produce dopamine, but **relentless dopamine creates an imbalance**. Your brain wants to seek more dopamine by watching more TikToks, but this leads to needing **more dopamine** just to "feel normal." This can lead to a **chronic dopamine deficit state** which can make you feel **depressed, anxious**, and cause **chronic pain or insomnia**.

RESISTING THE ATTENTION ECONOMY

Dr. Anna Lembke suggests a three-fold path to regaining our attention:

- **Abstain:** Regularly withdraw from your phone.
 - Turn off the phone, or use "airplane mode" to stop notifications.
 - Foster real-life social connection with friends and loved ones.
 - Read a book or go to your local library and browse.
 - Touch grass - go enjoy nature.
- **Maintain:** Intermittently avoid the phone during certain hours, or use time-limiting apps.
- **Seek out pain:** Reset the dopamine balance through positive uses of pain.
 - Try exercise, prayer, meditation, yoga, or boredom. Boredom can be a tool for creativity!

