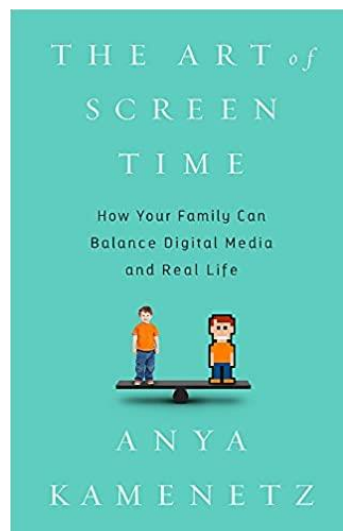**Book Review**

The Art of Screen Time: How Your Family Can Balance Digital Media and Real Life

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"How should we be worried over our kids becoming addicted to their phones? What will become of our digital world? And how should parents deal with it?" These questions are the basis of "The Art of Screen Time: How Your Family Can Balance Digital Media and Real Life" by Anya Kamenetz, now published in Thai translation as "Na Cho-Lok Ching: Somdun Mai Khong Khropkhrua Yuk Digital".

The book, as claimed by the author, is based on many scholars' questions to the suggestion from medical associations across the world which advise against letting a child under 2-year-old using smartphones, due to several damaging consequences. However, the author doubts that most parents in reality will be able to follow the instruction. Many working parents are employing entertainment from their smart phones' screen to distract their child, even for a passing moment when they are busy with personal tasks or taking a break. Furthermore, the world is progressing toward a fully digital era. Most technology including AI, the IOT (Internet of Thing), and other 'smart' technology needs a screen to operate.

With numerous deep and objective research, as claimed by the author (which doesn't seem to be a overstatement seeing over 40 pages citation), she aims to find the answer to the problem that almost every parent faces today, hoping to be the beacon for those who seek a solution among fears and propagated dangers from smartphones to their babies and trying to solve the question of the era regarding the role smartphones and other digital devices such as tablets, notebooks or computers in the family and the life of everyone in the digital era.

The readers do not need to go deep into the book to find what the author's proposed solution is, as it is stated in the subtitle "The Art of Screen Time: How Your Family Can Balance Digital Media and Real Life". The answer for the family is to balance living in a digital world and reality, but the more important question is 'How?', which the author has spent years of research to find out and we will discover in the book.

The book discusses risks from smartphones that most parents are concerned about such as their kids not getting enough quality sleep, obesity, or problems with anger management which will lead to aggressive behaviors such as throwing tantrums and raising their voice. Another issue found is that children who are addicted to their phones will be less developed physically, mentally and socially. Moreover it can be the cause of ADHD and autism, in other words, those who suffer from a learning disorder, are unable to control themselves, and are prone to suffer depression. These symptoms are considered negative effects that all parents should be aware of and try to understand how to live with smartphone technology to find the balance in the lifestyle of their children and their family. The book has interestingly offered a positive way and mindset to raise children in the digital era, which in this review I will explain in three main points; physical, mental, and social.

Physical Aspect

On the physical aspect, parents can engage with their kids' time when they are using this technology, or as the author calls it positive parenting in the digital age.' She points out that parents can spend their time playing smartphones together with their children, for example, discussing with their kids about the activity they do together in online platforms, or including other activities when they are on their phones such as mentioning books that they might be interested in or suggesting to move their bodies. However, not every family has the time to do activities on smartphones with their kids, because each family has different conditions and burdens in life. So, the balance between life online and in reality between kids and parents can be achieved through the parent being the role model in living life with balance for their children. As Maria Montessori, who comes up with Motessory's philosophy in raising kid, has written that " The environment itself will be the teacher without interference from parents or teachers who instead should observe in silent." She believes that children can learn and develop from the environment alone. As an effort to reduce time spent on their phones, families will also need communication and interaction with the children in a way that they can easily understand to set rules and limitations on how much time they can spend on their phone, with a chance for them to question and have their opinion about the rules, which will also serve as way to develop discipline and lead the children's interest into the right right path possible in the context of each family.

Mental Aspect

On the mental aspect, which is also an important aspect considering that people of all ages have basic mental needs and research has found that both parents and children have mental problems from using smartphones. From this book, the author has offered a practical way to cope with these mental problems, that is, parents need to manage their own emotions first. They should come to terms and adjust their attitude with the environment at the moment. For example, when comes to pornography, parents should be able to explain and leave some space for their kids to make their own decisions and control themselves. Even giving compliments to their kids is also a thing that parents should do regularly when their kids are able to make the right choices when using smartphones.

Social Aspect

On the social aspect, it is a challenging part for the parents to prepare their kids with social skills needed to face the violences and other dangers that will inevitably be found on their smartphones, along with other new technologies that will come up, there always will be pros and cons. Parents can help their kids learn from online together with learning

from reality such as encouraging them to practice music, make art, or play sports so they can develop in a more well rounded way, make friends and be able to think for themselves when facing difficulties and adapt in any types of situations. These can be a way for parents to help their kids build confidence while learning along with them.

Conclusion

To conclude, I am impressed with the subject and the content of this book which is interesting regarding the digital age that we live in right now, and many families can find the suggestions in this book practical to some extent. Among all aspects, what I think is most important to mention is to find the balance in the overloaded information and by doing so parents can be able to set examples and gain trust from their kids which is the foundation of any healthy relationships.

Reference

Kamenetz, A. (2018). *The Art of Screen Time: How Your Family Can Balance Digital Media and Real Life.* United States, USA: PublicAffairs.