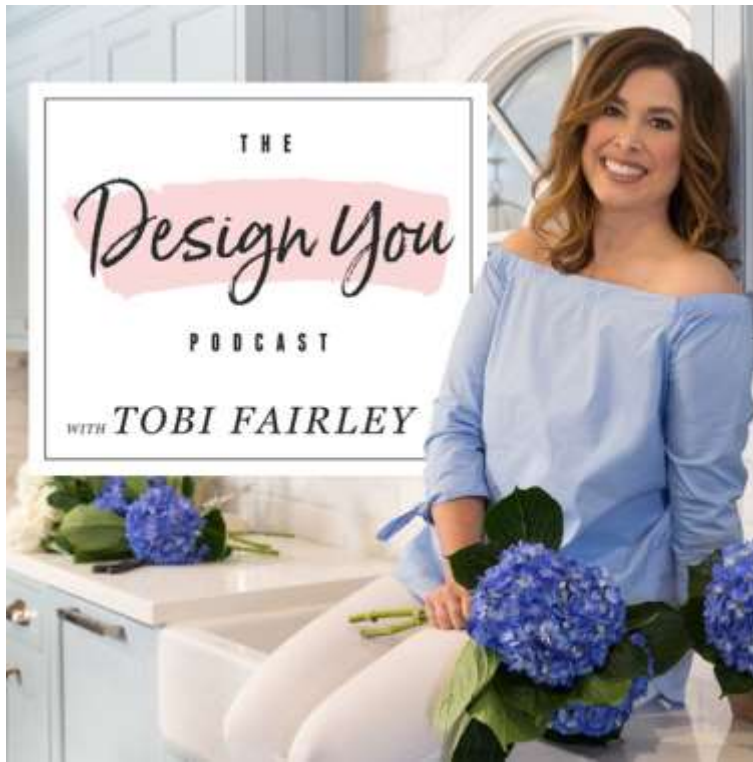


Ep #110: Managing Digital Distractions with Dr. Lori Whatley



Full Episode Transcript

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Tobi Fairley

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Tobi Fairley: You are listening to *The Design You Podcast* with Tobi Fairley, episode number 110.

Female Announcer: Welcome to *The Design You Podcast*, a show where interior designers and creatives learn to say no to busy and say yes to more health, wealth, and joy. Here's your host, Tobi Fairley.

Tobi Fairley: Hello, friends. You're probably still quarantined right now. Some of us are starting to have our restrictions lifted which feels wonderful and a little scary. It's an interesting time, but the reality is we don't really know what the next several months or year is going to look like. If we'll be back in our house soon quarantined. It's going to be an interesting ride and it already has been, so what's fascinating is because of that we have been on our digital devices more than ever and who even knew that was possible?

It felt like we were on them constantly, but now when we were stuck at home and we can't even get with people we're having Zoom calls for fun, for cocktail hour, we're having all of our meetings online and on Zoom and other apps and we're on our phones incessantly, which we already were, let's be clear. But it's really just increased in a lot of ways the way we use our digital devices, but the good news is we're probably kind of also tired of them a little bit, right?

We've been only dependent on them for a lot of our communication and so as we're able to get back into the world and with friends and other people, those people we love, we're going to sort of be sick of them a little bit and that's going to be a good thing.

So, for that reason I have Dr. Lori Whatley on today and she's a clinical psychologist who specializes in the effects of excessive digital device usage and we talk about that when we're stuck at home or what it means later as we start moving back into the real world and navigate what a lot of us are calling the new normal. We don't like it being called normal, but the new version of what after coronavirus looks like.

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I love the conversation Lori and I had. I think there's so much value in it for us because there's beautiful things about technology and electronics. I think what I've seen with the coronavirus is that it's been the best of technology to stay connected and everything was possible that we didn't even know was possible like working from home without a lot of trouble. Then, also helping us appreciate those real relationships we have and we talk about both of those things today. So, I hope you enjoy this episode with Dr. Lori Whatley.

Hi, Lori. Welcome to *The Design You Podcast* I'm so glad you're here today.

Lori Whatley: Hi, thank you for having me.

Tobi Fairley: So, it's fun to hear another southern voice because I have all kinds of people on the podcast sometimes, but we don't know each other personally until today. We're just meeting which is fun, and so it was delightful when I saw you come on and then I heard your voice and was like, "Oh, she's not like from New York or somewhere, she's like me. She's got to be close by." So, you were sharing with me that you live in the Atlanta area, right?

Lori Whatley: Right, right, I've been in Georgia pretty much my whole life, so I definitely am a southern belle, I guess.

Tobi Fairley: Love it! So, you're not only a southern belle, you're also a brainy person with like a really specific area of focus. So tell everybody you're a doctor, a clinical psychologist. Tell people a little bit about what you do, your area of expertise because I can't wait to get into this.

We're recording during the pandemic, but we planned to record prior to knowing this is what we would be dealing with and what your specialty is I think is so important right now. So, tell everybody about what that is.

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Lori Whatley: Right, it's amazing how busy I have been because it is very relevant. I had a book that came out February 11th called *Connected and Engaged*. It is a book about managing digital distractions. So, now more than ever we are having to manage our digital distractions when we are locked in our houses with not much more than that. But there are many ways that we can do that successfully and I have just really enjoyed talking to people about how to do that. Now, it is more of a challenge, but certainly possible.

Tobi Fairley: Awesome. So, we're going to get into everything from like what your devices do to your sleeping and your brain and this whole conversation really about how we're not really made for these devices. We're made to be connecting with other humans. So, let's start there first and then we'll get to the sleep and you've got some ways to kind of assess where you on this spectrum of device usage and things like that, but let's just start at that beginning point of we have adapted to being constantly on technology.

For me, working from home, everybody else is suddenly introduced to Zoom, I've been working on Zoom and the computer and on social media and stuff for about four years now, so it's not new to me, but it's new to a lot of people. I definitely, as much as I love the technology, I have a physical reaction when I'm on my gadgets too much.

I feel almost like there's an electric current running through my body a lot of times which is a sign that this isn't exactly how we were designed to operate. But tell us about that because we're kind of disconnecting from people more than ever even though we're so connected instantly with our devices and gadgets, but there's a lot of biological and psychological things that are happening there, right? When we're on devices too much.

Lori Whatley: Absolutely. It's so true. As humans we are meant for connection and that means in-person connection. We've kind of been tricked into thinking that when we're on a device that that is connection.

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“Well, I talked to so and so yesterday so I’ve connected with someone.”
That is not the same as in-person connections.

I tell people a like on Facebook is not the same as love in person. We’re meant to have this in-person eye-contact, hugs, touches, and when we don’t have that it’s like a plant that doesn’t have water. We become almost robot-like if it goes on for a long time.

So, the people that make the apps and all that we are so connected to online they know exactly how to keep us coming back and that’s how they make a living. The longer we’re online the more money they make, so it’s a business for them, but we don’t really realize. The general public doesn’t realize how addictive it is. How addictive our phones and being online is.

Tobi Fairley: Yeah, I’m feeling it more than ever right now. I’ve said a couple of times like on an Instagram Live or a training or just other things that I’ve done in the last few weeks that the thing I’m missing the most is being able to see my parents in person and to get a hug, like a hug from my mom.

I’ve texted my family and I’m like, “My hug meter is on empty.” It’s like my gas tank. I’ve never felt it exactly like I’m feeling it right now and so I think the beauty of having this conversation right now is maybe you’ll help get even more leverage on your audience, my audience, because we can absolutely all relate at this very moment to what we’re talking about.

So, I’m missing that and I think I took for granted or didn’t even notice that my husband is still here, my daughter is still here and they get tired of me hugging on them, but even just – my parents live about 45 minutes away and they’re in great health.

Once or twice a week every single week I see my mom and she’ll stop by my house or we’ll go to hers and I think I’ve taken for granted – even just, I’m a southerner like you, to be connecting with someone and pat them on

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the back or touch their arm or pat their leg. I'm that kind of girl and we don't have any of that right now. It's not happening.

Lori Whatley: Right. I'll tell you I have a private practice in Atlanta but I also see people virtually. I have an international business where I see people online and this week has been a week where I've had many, many comments from people all over the world that we're all sheltering in place and everyone is like, "This is starting to be really hard. I'm really missing sitting down, having coffee with a friend. I'm really missing hugs. I'm really missing those in-person interactions."

We are missing that, and hug your husband and your daughter every time you get a chance because –

Tobi Fairley: They're running from me right now. They're like, "Ugh, get away from me!" I'm like, "I'm sorry."

Lori Whatley: I totally get it. I totally get it. We absolutely need those hugs right now more than ever and it raises our endorphins in our brain, it improves our brain chemistry and what we want right now is to keep our immune system up and that's how we do it. That's how we do it.

Tobi Fairley: I love this, because of course we can understand it right now, but if we're thinking of it in the bigger picture, if we're thinking of it when life goes back to normal, and we're thinking about how we are addicted to these devices because those app creators do know that we're getting almost like validation or gold stars every time we get a like or something and they've trained us to want to be there instead of in-person with other people.

What can we learn from this current experience that gives us more leverage that when this is over to help us remember to not take that stuff for granted? Or even maybe to just notice even though we are not quarantined in most of the time, how much are we really missing out

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because we are sitting across the dinner table with our family on our device? Or we aren't making eye contact with someone?

I sometimes notice that. Even as busy as I get when my mom will stop by, it makes me sad sometimes because I'll think, "I was so busy when she was here doing something else either on my phone or between the meeting or whatever that I don't know that I looked her in the face and I'm not sure what she was wearing." When I notice that some days it makes me upset. It'll make me think, the next time she's here I want to see her and I want to remember what she had on and take her in. I think we're all doing that all of the time and not even noticing that we're multi-tasking.

We all know, it may be us, it may be a sister, a friend, a parent, a brother, a child, we know the people that are really into their devices that you don't remember the last time you made eye contact with them because they're always while talking to you also on Facebook or Instagram. So, help us use this experience right now as a reminder to change our ways as we go forward. So, what would you suggest to start moving in that direction?

Lori Whatley: Well, I really think that we're going to see a big change globally in our behavior because so many people had enjoyed or they've not enjoyed being disconnected in-person and they had realized I don't want to have these relationships, but I'm distracted. I want to be all-in. I want to be connected.

I think when we are all allowed to leave we're going to go running to other people to connect to them and hug them and be involved with them and make eye contact. So, I think we notice now – this has really gotten our attention and we notice, "Wow, I've been living a distracted life."

Like you said, our focus is not as good when we're distracted, our sleep is not as good when we are overstimulated because we've been online too much, that overstimulates our brain and it interrupts our REM sleep stages. We overeat. If we're eating and we're online or we're texting we overeat.

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So, there's just so many ways that we can do better when we know better and I feel like that this time at home, disconnected, in-person, is going to help us all know better.

Tobi Fairley: I agree. I think it's interesting. I think it'll change on both sides of the spectrum. In some ways I feel like people are now less afraid to use technology for business in a way that they've never heard of Zoom and now they can use it, so there's some positives to that, but I agree with you. For me, what it almost makes me feel like is the possibilities are endless of working with technology from home and it's great for efficiency.

At the same time I now, more than ever want to make sure I have some hard boundaries on when I stop working, and when I start working, and when I'm with somebody being totally present. I can kind of see change on both sides of the spectrum, but I definitely want to use this – here's what I keep thinking to myself. I don't want to just forget and go back to normal a month after this is over. I don't want to fall back in. I want to use this as a real catalyst for change.

So, if people are wanting that as well do they start with this idea of a technology assessment and even just start to get the awareness of whether it's now or on a regular basis? Like, how much are they even on it? Like measuring it? Where do we start in this whole kind of process?

Lori Whatley: Right, that's a great idea, measuring it. Instagram now has a function on their site where you can measure your time on Instagram and there are apps that you can also get that will tell you, "Okay, you've been on this too long," or, "You've met your quota here." That's really helpful because most of us don't realize how much time we're spending and so once we know better we can do better and we can be intentional.

I think that's really important. Another thing I tell people, I have assessments on my website which are free, people are welcome to go there. There's one for business, there's also one for personal, individual use just to answer some questions just to get you thinking, provoke thought

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like, “Am I maybe – yeah, maybe I am doing that,” or, “Maybe I do need to improve this.

But one surefire way I’ve told people to find out if you feel like you’re using your phone too much, I did this with myself, I left it at home one day and I went to the grocery store and I honestly – you talked earlier about vibrations in your body. I had phantom vibrations. I kept feeling it go off, text or whatever and I felt lost. I felt naked without my phone. I said, “Okay, I think I might have a problem. I’m too reliant on my phone.”

So, now, I set aside time every day that I’m going to go for a walk or go – and I do not take my phone. It’s nowhere around. At night, try this – this is a great thing to try. At night I don’t – a lot of people have their phone charging in their room. I have kids and I worry, too about my kids like everybody does.

Because a lot of people say, “Well, I have kids. I can’t do that.” But actually, you can. You can put it out, just if you put it in another room around the corner and see how you feel at night without that phone in the room. At first it’s going to feel awkward and then you’re going to find that you’re going to sleep a lot better.

There’s been so much research around this. Just having it in your visual field is a distraction. If so, we want to try to find ways to eliminate that so that we can be –

Tobi Fairley: It’s like it’s calling to you, kind of. When it’s sitting there during a meeting if you even for a minute get distracted or bored you’re like, “Oh, there’s my phone. I want to pick it up. I wonder if anybody texted.” It feels like this almost nakedness or vulnerability or something like if you don’t allow yourself to have it, which then I’m sure, obviously, is a surefire way to know that you do have some level of addiction.

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Because any time we try to restrict food or alcohol or anything else we all know what that feeling feels like. Like sort of out of control and feeling like we need it or rely on it, so yeah, I completely relate.

One of my friends doesn't have children, but she's an author, Nancy Levin, I've had her on the podcast and so she's written a book recently on boundaries and she talks about setting boundaries. She says that she turns her phone on airplane mode at night and then she doesn't turn it back on until after she's done her morning routine, like her meditation and stuff. I love the idea of that.

Yeah, there's a part of me that fear bubbles up about, like you're saying, "I couldn't do that because my child is here," or whatever, but the funny thing is my child is at home most of the time, still. She's upstairs asleep and we totally could, we could try it. It's probably more about weaning ourself, isn't it? Is that how that works?

Lori Whatley: Absolutely, and we try to tell ourselves stories about why we can't do this because we are rationalizing our behavior or being too connected with our phones, but I love the word that you used, boundaries. I think that tech is here to stay and it has made our lives wonderful and so much easier. Like you said, you work from home, I work from home. It's a wonderful thing, but I have very good boundaries with my tech.

After I got my doctorate and did my dissertation on the effects of texting on the marital relationship [inaudible 0:18:26] seeing it so much in my office. Couples would come in and it always came up. I said, "I need to learn more about this because I need to be able to address this with the people that are coming into my office."

So, the more research I did, the more interested I became and actually ended up making it my project for my doctoral project. But I'm just amazed at the research and how this affects us. It's just astounding.

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Tobi Fairley: So, let's talk about that a little. Of course, some of the normal things come to mind of like texting somebody else like if you're having an affair or something like that in a marriage, but I'm sure there's tons of other things. What are some of the ways that texting really impacts negatively your relationships that we may not be thinking about?

Lori Whatley: Well, one of the things is this thing we call "phubbing." I don't know if you've ever heard that word, P-H-U-B-B-I-N-G. It's like snubbing. If you're with someone and they're kind of not really paying you attention you feel snubbed. Well, if you're out with your spouse or your partner or you're on a date and the other person is looking at the phone under the table or even on the table and texting someone while you're talking to them or they take a phone call, that's phubbing.

It doesn't feel good and it definitely affects your relationship. You feel quite dismissed like, "Hey, maybe I'm not so important to this person." That sets a tone for the relationship that's not really good. So, my book *Connected and Engaged* talks a lot about how we have become disconnected and disengaged in our relationships. Some things that seem so insignificant like leaving your phone at home when you're on a date, or leaving your phone

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Tobi Fairley: In the car or something?

Lori Whatley: Yes, in your purse, in your bag. Not taking it out even when you're driving and someone else is in the car, those are nice ways to let people know that you care and that you want to be connected with them and you don't want to be distracted.

Tobi Fairley: I absolutely love that. I love that so much. Now that we're feeling like the importance of relationships and life feels super fragile. Like I said, my parents are young. They are in the early 70s, and they're in great health. Even some of us, like people my age, are dying of this. I'm in my late 40s. So, life feels so fragile, and then all of a sudden, it gives me a different perspective.

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I can be on my phone anytime. I can text anytime. When I'm with my parents now, or my brother, or a friend, or whatever, now, I'm like, "Oh, I want to be present with them." So, I love this shift that we're seeing. But don't you think in a lot of ways prior to this, and maybe even now during it, if people haven't heard a conversation like this, that they just start to accept something like phubbing as just kind of part of life?

Lori Whatley: We've normalized it. Yes, we've normalized it. Absolutely.

Tobi Fairley: In fact, I even think of my daughter. Like I said, she's a freshman in high school, and there's a few parents who when they go over to the parents' house for a birthday party or for something, the mom will have a basket and collect all of their friends, and they just hate it.

They get so mad, and they're like, "I don't want to go to their house anymore," but in some ways, there's that little part of me that's like, "That's amazing," because we didn't have that when I was growing up, but we had the best time ever, and we just enjoyed life and people.

Even thinking like you said about going to bed, and we're like, "Oh, I couldn't possibly not have my phone by my bed," and we're like, "Well, that's funny because until like 10 years ago, we never had our phone by her bed, and everybody was still okay." It's fine. You still manage somehow.

Lori Whatley: We turned out okay, right?

Tobi Fairley: Yeah, we did. Yes. I never felt like I had an electric current running through my body when I went to bed at night where I couldn't sleep, or relax, or really get a good night's sleep.

Lori Whatley: We know with kids, it affects their focus, it affects their mood, it affects sleep, and sleep is everything. It's so interesting because I'll have parents bring their kids into my office, and maybe they're struggling

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in school. So, now that I know what I know from my research, I'll ask questions like, "Do you have any digital devices in your room?"

"Yes, ma'am." "Okay. Well, do you look at them during the night?" "Yes, ma'am." "How much?" "Well, a lot." Sometimes I say, "Well, how much sleep do you get? Maybe an hour or two." "Oh, well, now I understand why you're so tired at school." The parents have no idea.

Tobi Fairley: Well, my daughter and a lot of her friends are that same way, and I just saw a little meme. They're always on TikTok now, which is their latest favorite app. She showed me, and she thought it was so funny this week, this little TikTok of a dad that was poking fun at this.

He was like, "Come on teachers, why are you all having virtual classes at like 9:00 in the morning? Don't you know all kids are staying up until 4:00 a.m. on their devices, and they need to sleep until noon?" But every parent I've talked to, all of them, especially right now when they're feeling kind of already sad that their kids are disconnected from their friends, they're just being lax. I'm not one to have a ton of stringent rules like that.

So, we're all relating on the fact that yeah, our kids are staying up till 4:00 in the morning and sleeping all day like they're in college or something. It's so strange, but this is really just shining a light on what they were already doing. We just weren't paying so close attention to it prior to this, I don't think.

Lori Whatley: It's true. It's true. It's amazing that we realize that they have a whole other life at night after we go to bed and they go to bed. It just changes like saying, "Okay, at 10 o'clock, you have to give me your devices, and you'll get them back in the morning." But I love your friend's idea of also not having your device for the first hour or two after you get up in the morning. That sets your mood for the day.

If you're on your device immediately when you wake up, you're distracted already. If you see something online that is depressing or upsetting, you're

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setting your mood for the day. So, really, I love doing the mindfulness, having a cup of tea, reading something uplifting in a book, or just listening to nice music, going for a walk, getting your body in the mode of peace and calm, and not starting it out with scrolling and liking.

Tobi Fairley: Right, and letting your email and anything that seems urgent, but that's not important, start to run your day, and already get you off your schedule, and all of that stuff.

Lori Whatley: Absolutely.

Tobi Fairley: You said something about reading also. I'm very conscious of the fact that probably, I don't know, six or seven years ago. I still have an iPad, but I don't use it that often, but when I first had gotten an iPad, I don't know, maybe a little longer ago than that, I started reading electronic books, and I was like, "Oh, this is great. I can take them with me on planes easily, and I don't have to pack all these books."

It wasn't very long at all that I went back to real books. For one thing, I write in, and underline, and use a pen, and that's how I learn, but there was something about, I think it was this whole idea, like feeling the electric current kind of thing, and my eyes getting tired, and really almost though even at a different level of feeling like I wasn't learning as much or I wasn't connecting as much as when I'm holding a book and I'm underlining it or writing in it.

So, I think that's one thing that it didn't take me very long to figure out that as technologically inclined as I like to think I am in a lot of ways, and I'm social media savvy and all that, there are parts of it that I definitely like the old fashioned version for a lot of reasons. Reading is one of them. But I do find myself right now, and it annoys me to death. It's part of my addiction. I'm telling on myself.

I'll find myself if I'm like sitting in my bedroom at night, and my husband and I do have a TV in our room, and we'll decide to watch a show or something.

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I no longer can stay completely focused on one device. I'm not just watching TV. I'll feel anxious or bored, and I'll find myself either scrolling Instagram or even wanting to play a game on my phone while we're watching television, and talk about an electric current. After that, I literally feel like my body is shaking when I'm walking around.

So, I've tried to be very conscious of this, and I'm like, at the very least, it's one device at a time because you absolutely do not need to be multitasking on the TV and the phone. I found myself doing it again during this quarantine. I guess it's probably a buffering of my emotions because we use devices like we use wine, or food, or anything else to tamp down our emotions. But what do you see? Is that very common? Do you see that other people are doing the same thing?

Lori Whatley: Absolutely. Multitasking with the devices is becoming more and more, and that's how we know that this problem is getting bigger and bigger because we can't just be addicted to this one thing. We have to also have this one going, and this one going. I always say, "What does that feel like for you?" Really, it doesn't feel good. None of us like it. It puts us kind of like in this hysteria mode, like chaos feeling in our body. We're just moving, moving, moving.

Tobi Fairley: Yes, it's like fight or flight or something like that.

Lori Whatley: Well, and then it causes us to make more adrenaline and cortisol, which are anxiety hormones, and our anxiety is going on in our body all the time, and we don't really realize what we're doing to it, what we're doing to our focus. Also, the blue light from these devices is keeping us up at night. It interrupts our production of melatonin, which is a sleep chemical in our body, and it does cause headaches, and people are telling me that right now, when they're working from home and they're on their computer all day, that they feel exhausted.

Tobi Fairley: I was going to ask you about that. I've worked from home for four years, and I have never felt as tired as I feel during the Coronavirus.

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So, I don't know if I'm on my devices more than I was, or I don't know what's going on, but I'm so depleted at the end of the day, and I have headaches a lot at the end of the day, which is not common for me. It is kind of allergy season here a little bit, but still, I've noticed both of those things.

Lori Whatley: Right. So, I've been recommending to people, yeah, believe it or not, it just takes a lot more. You don't have your commute anymore to break it up or to move around. You aren't getting up, and going out, and interacting with the colleagues at the office or whatnot. So, you're not breaking up your usage, and you need that. We need that.

So, I'm recommending to people instead of sitting in front of the computer constantly for hours, every hour or so, get up. Even if you just get up and stretch, or get up and go get a cold drink, or get up and go get a cup of tea, try to do something every hour to move your body. Our bodies are made to move. We're meant for movement just like we're meant for connection.

So, we need to be moving our bodies. Also, maybe every three hours or so, go outside for a minute. Get some fresh air. Get some sunshine. We need 20 minutes of sunshine a day right now to keep our immune system up. People say, "Well, I sit in the same place all day, and it's really hard." Definitely move around. I may see my first client in the morning in my study. Then I may move to the kitchen by a window.

By the time I'm done in the afternoon, I could be upstairs in a completely different room because that keeps us fresh. Actually, if we're able to do that, the longevity, we can work longer, stronger, more productive, more creative, if we break up our screen time.

Tobi Fairley: That is very insightful to me because I do normally work from home, and I tell people all the time, I have multiple workstations. I have this room upstairs, my yoga room, but also my podcasting area and home office. Then there's a desk in our living room that's really beautiful, and

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especially in the different times of the year, like in the winter, I love to be in there because there's a fireplace.

Then I have my interior design studio on the back of my house, and then I sometimes like to work at the desk in my bedroom. Well, I hadn't noticed until you're saying that that with the quarantine and my husband is working from home, and my daughter is working from home, we've assigned each other our zone so that we can all be operating at the same time. My husband has the living room, and I don't get to go in there.

I knew I kind of missed it, but now that you're saying that, I have like four workspaces normally, and I move through all of them, and I've literally been mostly in this room upstairs with the door closed. So, that's actually very telling to me. I knew something was going on different. I'm like, "I'm always on devices. I'm always working from home. What is the deal?" But that may be one of them because you're right, I'm just staying in this one place more often than my typical work from home schedule. That's so fascinating.

Lori Whatley: Changing scenery is very good for us.

Tobi Fairley: That's really, really good. Okay. So, anything else that anybody needs to be thinking of right now? They can go do an assessment on your website. They can start thinking about maybe being more present, whether they're multitasking and using two or three devices at time. For me, when I do that in the night where I've watched a TV show with my husband for two hours and been on the phone, at the end of it, I almost feel like I'm intoxicated, like I've had too much to drink, or like I was driving distracted or something.

Because I think back, and I'm like, "I kind of don't even remember what was happening for the last two hours," which I don't like that feeling at all. I'm like, "I kind of feel like I wasted time with my husband. I kind of wasted time with my daughter." Even though we were in the same room, we weren't present with each other.

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So, if they start to notice that feeling, and they can't remember what somebody had on, like I said, when they walked in the room or whatever, they didn't make eye contact. Those are going to be some telltale signs that they're like into their devices too much. So, what else besides getting a good night's sleep, putting their phone out of their room, moving around in their house, and going outside? Anything else that they need to think of during quarantine or any other time with their devices?

Lori Whatley: Right now, one thing which I didn't talk about and connected and engaged my book, but I didn't consider a pandemic. But one thing I am recommending right now is since we cannot have connection in person, especially everybody doesn't have the benefit that you and I have with having our families with us during this quarantine time. So, definitely, I want those people to be connected.

If they have to FaceTime, or Skype, or Zoom, whatever they do to connect, I really want to encourage that, at least once a day, check in with somebody. I know that many of the big companies that I work for have implemented like maybe, let's say, 9 o'clock in the morning, they'll have their teams check in with each other maybe on Zoom.

They don't even have to have a reason or an agenda for the meeting. They're simply looking at each other and saying, "How are you doing? I just want to be here for you. Do you want to talk about anything? How's homeschooling going? How's it going for you to be in your home? How are your parents doing?" It's just good to check in with each other right now. We really need to do that right now.

Tobi Fairley: Which there's so much loneliness and depression anyway in the world these days, so I'm sure that's just compounded when people are physically disconnected from people, right?

Lori Whatley: Absolutely, absolutely.

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Tobi Fairley: Yeah, that's important. I've read several articles on this. I was reading one this morning that was telling me the why I am I so tired thing, but also, I read a great little how-to article recently in the last week that said, "Be sure and have some of those Zoom calls or connection calls that have absolutely nothing to do with work."

I like that idea too because I love to work, I tend towards workaholism, and I like to get stuff done. So, having a happy hour or almost like a meal with your parents over Zoom or something would be a great to connect, and just a change of focus. It's almost like flipping that switch of work is over, and now, I'm doing social time or something.

Lori Whatley: It's so important. We don't realize how much that does for us in our productivity and our creativity to log off of work and log into personal life. Just like you change where you're sitting in your house, change the project you're working on. I had one client, it was great, we came up with an idea. She was feeling isolated and lonely, as you mentioned.

So, she called her mom, and her mom, who was in another state, and they Zoomed, and her mom taught her how to make a family recipe. They were in the kitchen. She had her mom propped up there in the computer, and walked her through it, and they both had a glass of wine. It was a great project. So, I recommend doing lots of things like that right now.

Tobi Fairley: So good. So, try to reimagine anything you would be doing in person that you're really missing with someone, seeing if you can make a version of that that's virtual.

Lori Whatley: Yes, it can actually be fun.

Tobi Fairley: Yeah, I agree. Well, and that's one of the things that I think we could carry into the future. Not to replace personal connection, but for those of us who do have family that lives out of town, or our friends that live out of town, that were always saying, "Oh, we should get together." This, to me, is one of the silver linings of learning about Zoom and all these other

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things to be like, “We don't have to wait until Christmas to see each other every year. We could literally be doing this once a month.”

Lori Whatley: So true. That is us taking control of our technology rather than allowing it to control us, and that's really what this is all about, is us managing our devices as opposed to them managing us.

Tobi Fairley: That's so good. Yeah, and that's right back to boundaries, right?

Lori Whatley: I love that.

Tobi Fairley: Yeah, I love that too. So good. Well, thank you. This was so helpful for me personally, but I think it would have been a great conversation anyway because so many people would have needed it, but I think that it's perfect timing that we're having this conversation now because I think it will resonate on a whole other level with people and get our attention more of how we're missing out, and how we're not being present, I think, in life. So, I appreciate you so much.

Lori Whatley: Absolutely. Thank you. It's an honor for me to get to be here and share with you.

Tobi Fairley: Well, so fun, and everybody, if you want more information on Dr. Lori Whatley, we will have all of that on the show notes, and we'll be sharing all over Instagram like we do every week, and all that stuff. So, you can go take her assessments and find all of those things. Thank you, again, for being with us, and I hope to connect with you again very soon.

Lori Whatley: Thank you. Thank you so much.

Tobi Fairley: Okay. Do you have some ideas for how you want to change the way you're showing up with electronics? Do you want to detox? Do you want to have dinners where you're not sitting across the table with someone with their face in the phone? Do you want to make sure that you're driving in the car next time with those people you love and your

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device is put away in your bag or your purse so that you can actually connect with them?

Well, I definitely want that. This has been really a game changer for me, everything Lori and I talked about, and really, just in general, the whole pandemic and how it separated me from those I love most, and how when I'm with them now, I want it to be in a totally different way. I want to be so present, and I hope you want that too.

So, thanks for listening today. I hope this was valuable to you, and you know that's my number one goal, is to bring you the things you need and even the things you don't know you need. So, I'll be back with you next week with another great episode that's going to help you thrive.

Whether we're in a pandemic, whether we're in a recession, whether life goes back to the way it used to be, or it's something even better, which is what I think will happen, I'll be there for you every step of the way. So, thanks for listening, and I'll see you again really soon.

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