# TECHNOLOGY CONTRACT FOR FAMILIES

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71 TOES

My goal is to help empower you to embrace motherhood, be more intentional in your parenting, make memories, be present with your family, and get inspired to do this motherhood gig better.

# dear children,

You are the proud owners of technology we never dreamed of having when we were your age! You are good and responsible children and we want you to have these things.

As with many things in your life, as your parents, we feel the need to present some rules and guidelines because we adore you and want to help you be safe. We have been around a little longer than you have. We have seen the marvels of all this great technology and we are so grateful for it! But we have also noticed a gradual decline of old-fashioned communication that we feel is so very important for your spirit and your general development. So we'd like to introduce you to some rules and regulations we are establishing in our home.

Please read through the following contract. We hope that you understand it is our job to raise you into well-rounded, healthy young individuals that can function in the world and coexist with technology, not be ruled by it. You may be mad at us for a while about some of these things. You have enjoyed some great technological freedom which you have not abused and we are proud of you for that. But we feel the need to train you (as we train ourselves) to not let technology take over in our family or with your friends.

Failure to comply with the following list will result in termination of your technology freedom.

We love you with all our hearts and look forward to sharing several million text messages with you in the years to come.

# house rules

1. Any cell phone in our home is a family phone. We, your parents, have bought these things. We pay for them. We are loaning them to you with the understanding that you will act responsibly.

2. If you choose to put a password on your devices, we will always know the password.

3. Hand the phone to one of your parents promptly at 8:30pm every school night and every weekend at 11pm. It will be shut off for the night and turned on again before you leave for school.

4. Leave your phone home sometimes and feel safe and secure in that decision. It is not alive or an extension of you. Learn to live without it. Be bigger and more powerful than FOMO — fear of missing out.

5. After school you are mine for at least 15 minutes. Tell me our “three things” about your day before thinking about looking at a screen.

# usage rules

1. At this point in the game, we reserve the right to be the only ones to give you license to any new apps. Please let us know if you want something new and why. We love to discuss these things with you, and we mostly trust your judgment.

2. No pornography. If you have access to the web, search it only for information you would openly share with us. If you have a question about anything, ask a person — preferably us… we know more than you think we do.

3. Do not take seductive or inappropriate pictures of yourself or anyone else. Remember first and foremost that in our family we seek after goodness and want to shine our light to others. Remember also that cyberspace is vast and more powerful than you. Be careful what you put out there. It is hard to make anything of this magnitude disappear, including a bad reputation and hurt feelings.

4. In addition to music you love, download music that is new or classic or different from what all your peers listen to. Your generation has access to music like never before in history. Take advantage of that gift. Expand your horizons.

5. Play a game with words or puzzles or brainteasers every now and then.

# daily rules

1. Do not ever ignore a phone call if the screen reads ‘mom’ or ‘dad’ — not ever.

2. If you would not make a call to someone’s landline, wherein their parents may answer first, then do not call or text. Listen to those instincts and respect other families like we would like to be respected.

3. Do not text, email, or say anything through your device that you would not say in person, out loud, with your friend’s parents in the room. Do not involve yourself in conversations that are hurtful to others. Censor yourself.

4. Although it is okay to take your phone to school with you, realize that it is mostly so that we can get a hold of you if we need you. Pay attention to your teachers. Work on assignments. Fill your brains with knowledge. At school, it must be turned off at lunch. Have a conversation with the people you text in person. It is a life skill.

5. Turn it off, silence it, put it away in public. Especially in a restaurant, at the movies, or while speaking with another human being. You are not a rude person; do not allow your phone to change that.

6. Keep your eyes up. See the world happening around you. Stare out a window. Listen to the birds. Take a walk. Talk to someone new. Wonder without googling.

# final rules

1. If your device falls into the toilet, smashes on the ground, or vanishes into thin air, you are responsible for the replacement costs or repairs. Mow a lawn, babysit, stash some birthday money. It will happen and you should be prepared.

2. You will mess up and we will take your phone away when you do. We will sit down and talk about it. We will start all over again. We are always learning. We are on your team. We are in this together.

3. Most importantly, remember that your spirit is the most important thing that you have. Don't let this privilege cramp your wonderful spirit. Don't ever let your phone or technology seep into your relationship with your Heavenly Father. The noise of technology is quick to make us all think looking at a screen is more important than talking, especially to Heavenly Father. Make a practice to read your scriptures before you check texts or instagram in the morning. Pray first as well.

It is our hope that you can agree to these terms. Most of the points listed here do not just apply only to phones or iPods, but to life in general.

You are growing up in a fast and ever changing world. It is exciting and enticing. Trust your powerful mind and giant heart above any machine.

We love you forever.

# love,