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Technology

How is technology affecting your listening and your speaking?

This is an important enquiry. It's a deep subject for most people in the Western world, to this is something to stay conscious of from now on, continuing the process that you start here.

Technology is unstoppable, and it has dramatic effects on human behaviour, often unpredictably so. Our laptops, tablets, mobiles and headphones have changed the way we behave, publicly and privately; taken with the multi-track, fast-edit, always-on world, the pressure on our attention is intense. Fear of missing out (FOMO) infects millions, driving an addictive relationship with technology that's evinced by constant checking in. Already smart speakers are the fastest-selling new technology for homes. Soon we will be speaking to AI devices, and within decades we will probably have implants in our skulls that allow us to speak and listen – but will it be to people, or to intelligent agents rather like Jarvis in Iron Man?

Take a few minutes and consider carefully how technology affects your communication today – both speaking and listening, at home, at work and with your friends or important social groups.



Some of the questions you might like to ask are:

- How often do you check in with social networks?
- Do you prefer to text, email or IM rather than speak to someone?
- Does your family sit around meal tables with screens on?
- What's your curfew on screen time? Do you do email in bed?
- How does your use of screens or headphones in general affect your social interaction and other behaviour?

If this topic concerns you (and it should), I do recommend also checking out Sherry Turkle's excellent books 'Alone Together' and 'Reclaiming Conversation'.