


Stuck in Our Screens: Bad Behavior, Social Drama, and Our Loss of Connection





What happens when adults trade maturity for adolescent drama and teens buy into nonreality?

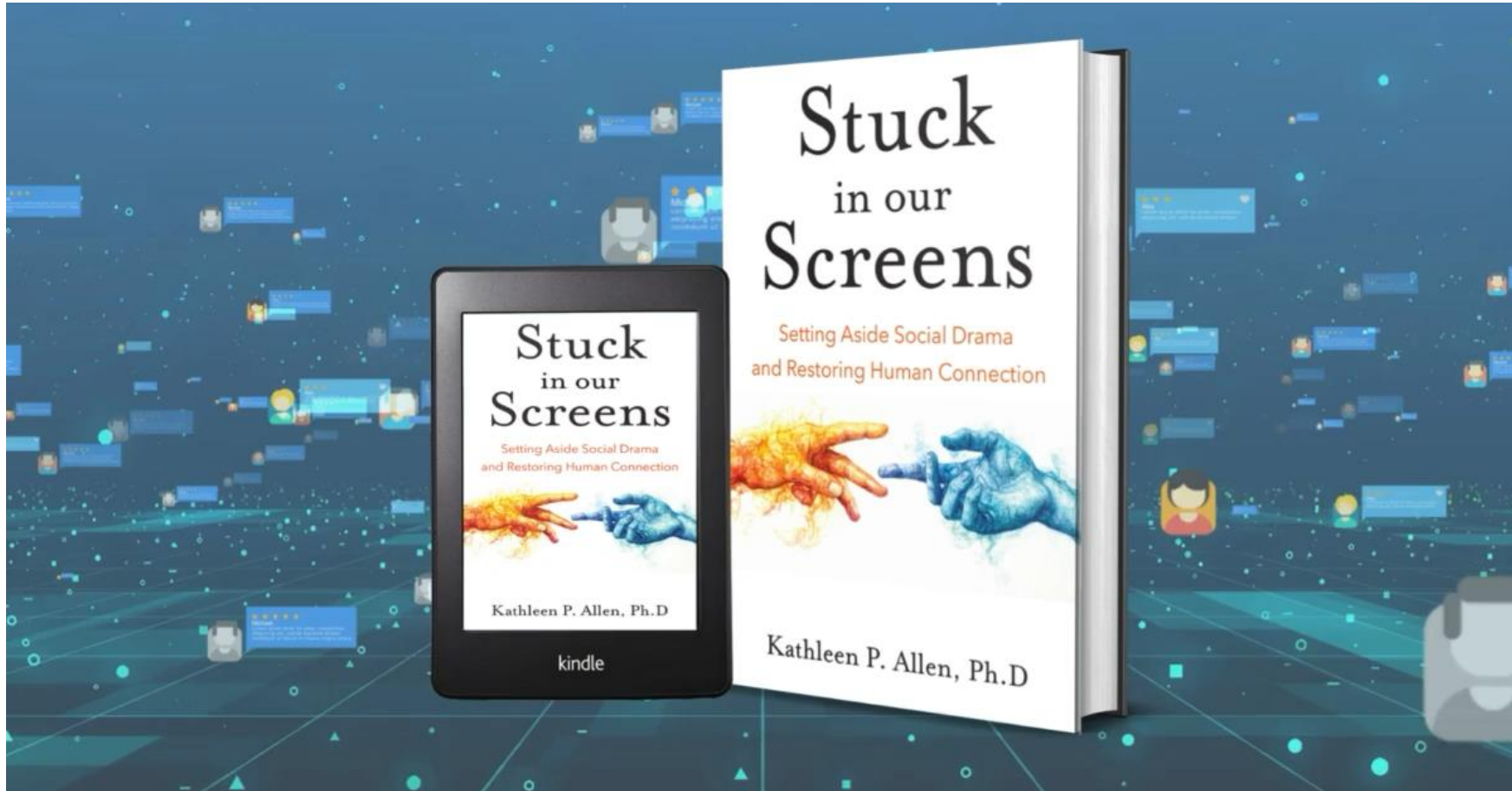
This presentation will explore research on youth and adult social drama and its effects on all of us, explicitly through our obsession with screens and social media.



Agenda

- Why did I write this book?
- Social Drama and Its Characteristics
- Social Drama and Social Media
- 2016 AND BRAIN FREEZE...
- Our Society-Wide Personality Disorder
- Good News for Families
- Getting Out of Our Funk
- AI: The Next Frontier

Why did I write this book? *It's a long story.*



Where did it start?

**Adolescent
Social
Drama**



When I looked into social drama, I saw...

- Identity Work
- Narcissism and Entitlement
- Rejection Sensitivity
- FoMO
- Weak Impulse Control
- Co- and Group- Rumination
- Groupthink



And much of it was amplified by social media

- Commodification
- Branding
- Celebrity-ism
- Excessive Self-Disclosure
- Meanness, Cruelty, and Bullying
- Moral Disengagement, Disinhibition, Deindividuation
- Ingroup Love and Outgroup Hate
- Disconnection from Reality
- Screen Addiction



THEN...

- 2016
- Brain Freeze
- Loss of Focus

and

- Adult Social Drama on Steroids

Teresa Guidice and the Table Incident



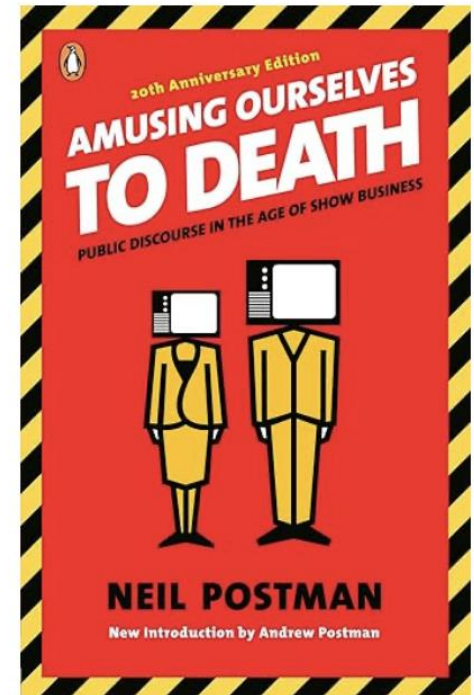
So, I changed the direction of the book

- From adolescent social drama to bad adult behavior
- From “fixing” youth, to considering our society’s behavior as a whole
- From a focus on parenting challenges to a focus on society-wide problems

Forty-plus years ago...

"Americans no longer talk to each other, they entertain each other. They don't exchange ideas; they exchange images. They don't argue with propositions; they argue with good looks, celebrities, and commercials..."

Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, 1984



We have a society-wide personality disorder
and
we are feeding off each other

- Technoference, Nomophobia, Selfitis
- Mindlessness, Loss of Focus, Distractions
- Cancel Culture
- Social Polarization and Fragmentation
- Loneliness, Anxiety, Depression
- Loss of Cognitive and Social Competencies

Is there any good news for families?

- Sarah Coyne's Findings
- Authoritative Parenting
- Bell to Bell Prohibitions on Phone Use
- Warnings on Social Media Platforms
- Phone Free Childhood/Let Grow
- Flip Phones and the Luddite Club
- Social Emotional Learning
- 40 Developmental Assets

Social Emotional Learning





40 Developmental Assets® for Middle Childhood (ages 8-12)

Search Institute® has identified the following building blocks of healthy development—known as **Developmental Assets**®—that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible.

External Assets	Support	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Family support—Family life provides high levels of love and support.2. Positive family communication—Parent(s) and child communicate positively. Child feels comfortable seeking advice and counsel from parent(s).3. Other adult relationships—Child receives support from adults other than her or his parent(s).4. Caring neighborhood—Child experiences caring neighbors.5. Caring school climate—Relationships with teachers and peers provide a caring, encouraging environment.6. Parent involvement in schooling—Parent(s) are actively involved in helping the child succeed in school.
	Empowerment	<ol style="list-style-type: none">7. Community values youth—Child feels valued and appreciated by adults in the community.8. Children as resources—Child is included in decisions at home and in the community.9. Service to others—Child has opportunities to help others in the community.10. Safety—Child feels safe at home, at school, and in his or her neighborhood.
	Boundaries & Expectations	<ol style="list-style-type: none">11. Family boundaries—Family has clear and consistent rules and consequences and monitors the child's whereabouts.12. School boundaries—School provides clear rules and consequences.13. Neighborhood boundaries—Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring the child's behavior.14. Adult role models—Parent(s) and other adults in the child's family, as well as nonfamily adults, model positive, responsible behavior.15. Positive peer influence—Child's closest friends model positive, responsible behavior.16. High expectations—Parent(s) and teachers expect the child to do her or his best at school and in other activities.
	Constructive Use of Time	<ol style="list-style-type: none">17. Creative activities—Child participates in music, art, drama, or creative writing two or more times per week.18. Child programs—Child participates two or more times per week in cocurricular school activities or structured community programs for children.19. Religious community—Child attends religious programs or services one or more times per week.20. Time at home—Child spends some time most days both in high-quality interaction with parents and doing things at home other than watching TV or playing video games.
Internal Assets	Commitment to Learning	<ol style="list-style-type: none">21. Achievement Motivation—Child is motivated and strives to do well in school.22. Learning Engagement—Child is responsive, attentive, and actively engaged in learning at school and enjoys participating in learning activities outside of school.23. Homework—Child usually hands in homework on time.24. Bonding to school—Child cares about teachers and other adults at school.25. Reading for Pleasure—Child enjoys and engages in reading for fun most days of the week.
	Positive Values	<ol style="list-style-type: none">26. Caring—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to help other people.27. Equality and social justice—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to speak up for equal rights for all people.28. Integrity—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to stand up for one's beliefs.29. Honesty—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to tell the truth.30. Responsibility—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to accept personal responsibility for behavior.31. Healthy Lifestyle—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to have good health habits and an understanding of healthy sexuality.
	Social Competencies	<ol style="list-style-type: none">32. Planning and decision making—Child thinks about decisions and is usually happy with results of her or his decisions.33. Interpersonal Competence—Child cares about and is affected by other people's feelings, enjoys making friends, and, when frustrated or angry, tries to calm her- or himself.34. Cultural Competence—Child knows and is comfortable with people of different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds and with her or his own cultural identity.35. Resistance skills—Child can stay away from people who are likely to get her or him in trouble and is able to say no to doing wrong or dangerous things.36. Peaceful conflict resolution—Child seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.
	Positive Identity	<ol style="list-style-type: none">37. Personal power—Child feels he or she has some influence over things that happen in her or his life.38. Self-esteem—Child likes and is proud to be the person that he or she is.39. Sense of purpose—Child sometimes thinks about what life means and whether there is a purpose for her or his life.40. Positive view of personal future—Child is optimistic about her or his personal future.



References on Helping Families

- Coyne, S.
- Baumrind, D.
- NYS law
- Haidt, J., Skenazy, L., and Twenge, J.
- Logan Lane
- CASEL
- Search Institute
- MAMA

Getting Out of Our Funk

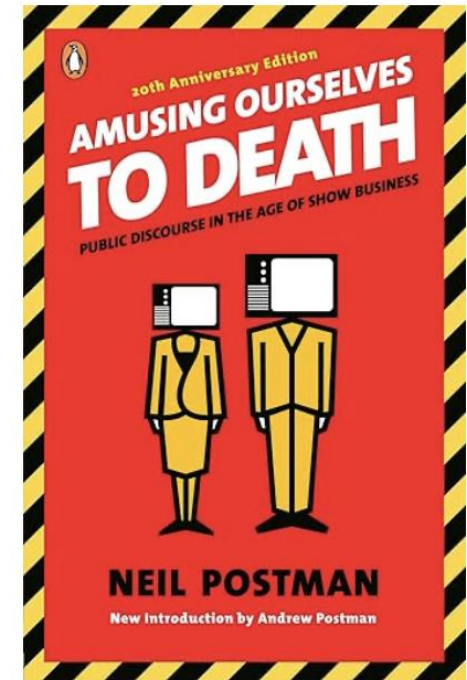
- Teach Digital Media Literacy and Critical Thinking
- Civics Education and Debate Clubs
- More Face-to-Face Contact and Community Building
- More Sharing, More Conversation, More Civic Engagement
- “All Kids Are Our Kids”
- More Reading and Less Screen-Time
- Addiction Counseling

Artificial Intelligence

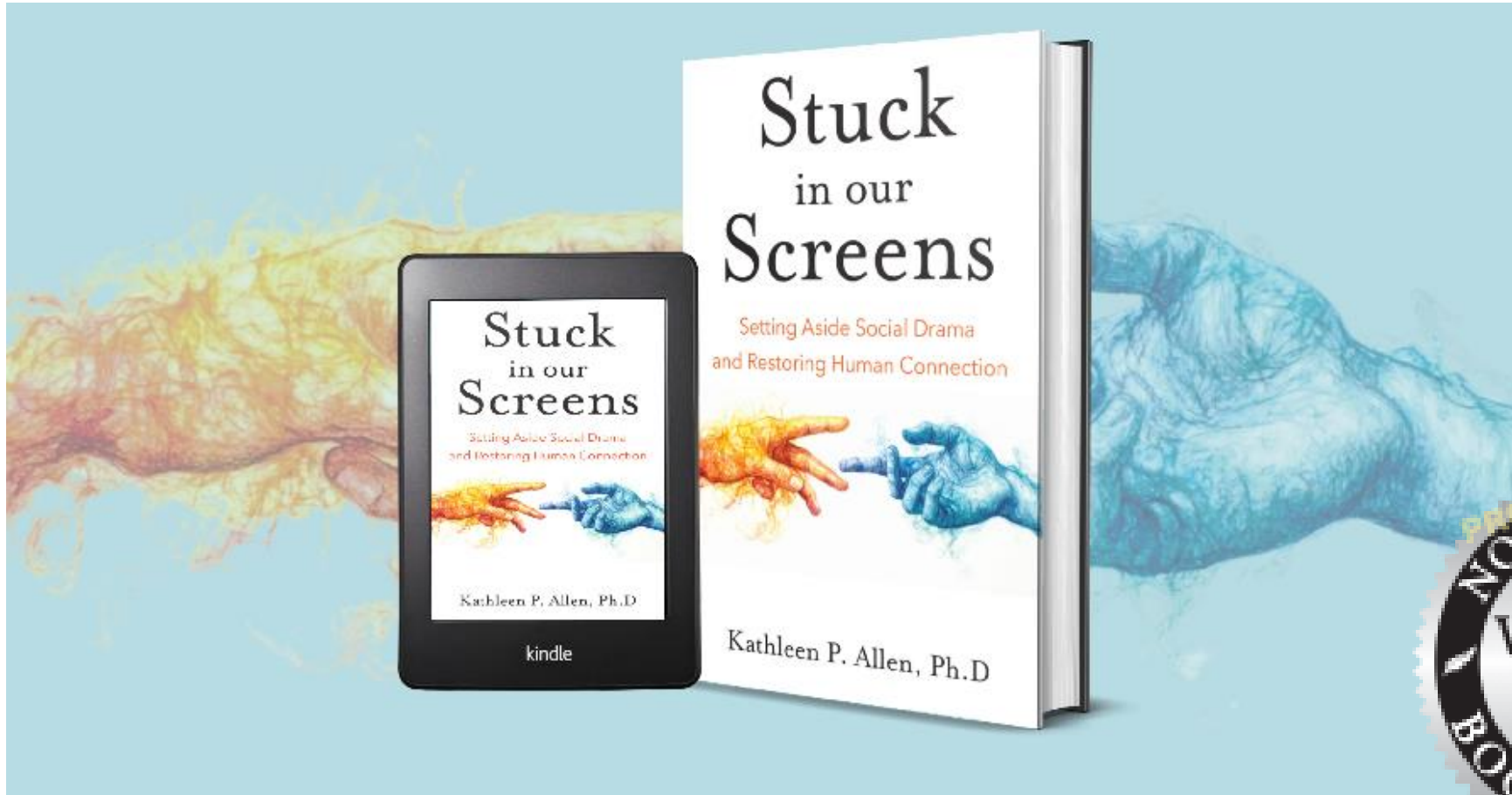
- Decentralize Data Collection
- Personal Ownership of Data
- Incentives
- Rules

Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, 1984

“When a population becomes distracted by trivia, when cultural life is redefined as a perpetual round of entertainments, when serious public conversation becomes a form of baby-talk, when, in short a people become an audience and their public business becomes a vaudeville act, then a nation finds itself at risk; culture-death is a clear possibility.”



Available at bookstores and online.





Questions?

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