

THE THRIVING ABROAD PODCAST

Thriving Abroad Podcast



**EPISODE 88
DIGITAL WELLBEING
FOR EXPATS
MAKING FRIENDS WITH
TECHNOLOGY**

Dr Heidi Forbes Öste

Louise Wiles and Dr Heidi Forbes Öste
TRANSCRIPT

Welcome

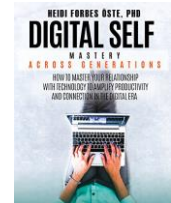
Thanks for downloading the transcript from Episode 88 with Dr Heidi Forbes Öste. If you would like to learn more about us, have some questions, or would simply like to start a conversation with us, our website/contact details are given below.

Questions to Help You to Reflect on Your Relationship with Technology

- How would you describe your relationship with technology?
- When do you feel most overwhelmed when interacting with technology, what is going on?
- What can you do to reduce that sense of overwhelm and create a better technological balance?
- For parents, which of the strategies suggested by Heidi could you incorporate into your conversations with your children/teens about how you all use technology?
- How do you use technology to support your international lifestyle? What could you begin to do?

About Dr Heidi Forbes Öste

Heidi is a Behavioral Scientist and Digital Wellbeing Advisor. She is best-selling author of [Digital Self Mastery](#) series and executive producer and host of the [Evolving Digital Self](#) and [Global Nomad Hacks](#) podcasts.



She combines 25 yrs experience in social strategy consulting with her scholarly research in the human relationship with technology and her personal passion for wellbeing. As Managing Partner of [2BalanceU](#), she holds several advisory roles as an expert on strategic integration of Digital Wellbeing and Ethics to support the transition into the digital era without losing humanity in the process. Through her board roles she has been recognized for her global outreach mentoring and professional development for women entrepreneurs and start-ups. She is Co-Founder of Valhalla d'Oc integrating digital wellbeing, sustainability and remote productivity and social connection for board retreats.

Her mantra: "Knowledge is Power, Sharing is Powerful™" She is a Global Nomad at heart and mind. American by birth, Swedish by marriage, mum to two kids in launching phase, "based" in San Francisco, Jackson Hole, Gosnold (Cape Cod), Malmö (Sweden) and Bezier (Southern France).

About Podcast Host: Louise Wiles

- As well as the podcast host, Louise is a professional coach and supports people through the challenges and opportunities that come with change and transition, including international relocation. Louise uses a strengths-based and wellbeing framework as the foundation for creating positive change based on an inspiring vision of the future.
- Louise has lived and worked across Europe moving seven times in the past twenty years and recently published *Thriving Abroad: The definitive guide to professional and personal relocation success*. You can buy a copy [HERE](#) and use the code THRIVING20 to access a 20% discount. There is an associated workbook which you can download for free [HERE](#)

Enjoy the Podcast?

- Deciding, planning and making an international move can be an exciting but also complicated and stressful experience. This podcast provides a wealth of advice on each stage of the process helping you to create a smooth relocation and transition experience.
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- **Post a review and share it.** Thank you!
- Connect with podcast host Louise Wiles. You can connect with me via my email Louise@Louisewiles.com, I reply to all emails personally. You can also find me on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Linkedin](#)
- For more updates and to register for the weekly podcast newsletter visit the Thriving Abroad website [HERE](#) and register for the newsletter.

Louise Wiles 00:27

Hello, and welcome, Heidi, it's great to have you joining the Thriving Abroad Podcast today.

Heidi Forbes Oste 00:33

Thank you so much for having me,

Louise Wiles 00:35

Louise. Well, I'm really looking forward to this conversation. And we're going to be talking about technology. And I kind of have in my mind that I'd like to talk about it in two ways, how we can thrive through this sort of never-ending evolution and development from a technological perspective. But then also how we can use technology to help us thrive through transition, and in particular, international mobility and relocation. But before we get into those questions, I would love you to tell us a little bit about yourself. Perhaps you could share a bit about your international background, because I know you have quite an internationally mobile life. And then also tell us how you got to be doing what you're doing and your work focusing on digital mastery and technology.

Heidi Forbes Oste 01:30

Sure, well, so I guess to start with, I'm a sort of a geek at a young age, and we're talking, you know, mid 80s, I'm that old. But so, I got to play with computers very early, my school was one of the first I got the apple 2E's and I got kind of hooked early. But I wasn't in the programming. I mean, I did programming in the beginning, but it was really more just I loved the ability to use computers to, I mean, back then it was creating banners and silly things like that, but to really, to have fun, and to be able to connect people and things. So that was really sort of the first instigation for that, for me, I grew up I was I was born in the States, in New England, and lived there until I was about 17, 18. And really got my first taste of living abroad when I studied abroad in Austria for a year and got completely hooked, did sort of the classic, got to get a Eurail pass and see as much and as many places as possible. And it really gave me a sense of being part of something bigger than myself. And wanting to engage with that and ended up doing my studies in international affairs and international marketing strategy. And going back and studying again, in Brussels, and really, you know, working over in Europe for about 10 years. And of course, as I was finishing up a job there, I was working for Chrysler Europe actually setting up their internet strategy, which is, this is back in the days when it was a question of whether you want to register a URL or not. So, we were arguing, my argument was you need to register everything Chrysler dot, you know, whatever. So it was, you know, it was way back when, and yet it was a really exciting time to be involved with setting up systems to help people collaborate better, and to connect better and that job finished up because I was a contract worker. And as anybody who knows the story about Chrysler, Daimler, Daimler and Chrysler sort of merged, but really, they sort of bought into them. But my job disappeared. And so, I came back to the states to look at how can I use what I learned to to help American companies come abroad versus the other way around, and ended up sort of finding actually a great job in Germany instead. And so, I moved back, and while I was back in that brief period, I happened to meet my husband who's Swedish. So, it was sort of this random, you know, he was in the US, and I was sort of coming back and forth. Anyway, long story short, we ended up getting married, moving back to Europe, and have sort of bounced back and forth between those two worlds and really raising our children as global citizens as a result, and really using technology to keep that continuity in both our lives and our relationships with our extended networks and communities. And over the years,

I worked in social strategy, building tools to really help people network better and share resources was very involved in, in women's mentor and programmes for startups. And really just helping them understand how they can grow to larger markets using technology. And ended up is sort of doing that for, you know, for 20 years and really loved it, you know, sort of working in that space. But found that, you know, once it had finally gotten momentum where companies were actually putting social strategy as a priority, I sort of felt like my work was done there, it was sort of I, you know, I'd carried that flag. And I really wanted to do something more. So, I went back and did my PhD to really understand the behavioural science behind it. And understand how, how it works and why it works and the importance of developing those relationships. And during that time, is when I really started learning more and getting very fascinated by digital wellbeing. And by that being on the much bigger perspective, it's not just sort of the Google App of digital wellbeing, which came along later. But really looking at the human relationship with technology and how we engage with it, and how we can use technology to enhance our ability to be more human, rather than having it become a disrupter. And, and that's really where the digital self-work evolved. My digital self-mastery series that I wrote really came out of some of the findings from my dissertation, but also just from my experience of watching how people apply technologies, and that some of the things that they struggle with, but also some of the successes along that journey. So sorry, long, long answer to your question. But hopefully, that gave you a little bit of a flow of sort of where that background came from.

Louise Wiles 06:55

No, absolutely. It did. And, and, okay, so lots of questions in my mind from that introduction. But let's just start with that digital mastery and your book, because I've read your book. And it really actually did achieve, hopefully, what you set out for your book to achieve because it made me think about my relationship with technology, which I had really never thought about before. And actually, to my shame, I kind of realised I had a bit of a I have a bit of a childish relationship with it, in that, it's fine when it's all going well. But when it goes wrong, I lose it completely. And I don't actually think really carefully about how I interact and use it. So, I took quite a lot from that book, and it's made me think so I'm really interested to see, perhaps you could give me a bit of coaching session live about this, but let's just for the audience's benefit, can you just describe what you mean by digital self-mastery? Because you talk about balance, so perhaps talk a bit about what that looks like? And what it looks like when you're not in balance?

Heidi Forbes Oste 08:04

Sure. Well, so I mean, as, as we've all experienced balance isn't something that is continuous, we don't always have balance, we're always a little bit, you know, we have moments of balance, and then we have periods where we feel overwhelmed. And then there's other periods, we're sort of feeling, I don't know, the best way I can describe it is sort of those periods where you have too much free time, and you get nothing done, because you have too much free time, you know, no one's ever experienced that, I'm sure. So, there's, you know, we really look at it on a scale of sort of, you know, from the people that are so afraid to use technology, there's fear and anxiety that that limits their - unfortunately, we're living in an age where pretty much everything is connected, right? So, if you're, if you're afraid to actually use the technology, it limits your capabilities in so many different ways. And then the whole other end of the spectrum, where you're, we're talking about extreme addiction. And when I say addiction, it's really it is more on the absolute extreme in this context. So, there you're talking about,

you know, the case studies where you have the video gamers who wear a diaper so they don't have to separate themselves from their computer, they can play for 24 hours straight and never get up from their seats.

Louise Wiles 09:28

It that true, gosh I didn't know that.

Heidi Forbes Oste 09:31

Oh, yeah, no, I mean, there's these crazy and there you're talking, that's more on, you know, on a psychological, it's that trigger, and people that tend to get to that extreme, also tend to have other addictions. It's more the addictive personality that takes it to that extent. So, we're talking very extreme sides of the pendulum. The balance is right in the middle, and we often are sort of teetering between those pieces that are just above and just below, and then there's others that are sort of, you know, so that the scale is actually, you know, seven steps. So, there's, you know, there's also times where, you know, you start to get really comfortable with technology and you want to play, and you maybe start, you know, fear of missing out, you want to try all the new tools and all the good all the great options. And then you get overwhelmed with spending all your time trying to figure those things out, but you don't actually get your work done. So, you lose productivity there as well. On the other side, where you're sort of, you know, you're dabbling a little bit, not taking the time to actually learn the technologies. And so, although you have access, you're sort of, you're not taking the step to really actually utilise them. And that balance piece is when you actually find the right tools, you've gotten rid of the things that aren't effective for you, you're, you know, you're willing to take on some new technologies as they come along, but you're taking the time to learn them properly. But when you do that, you're also eliminating the things that overlap, because as we've all seen, as new technologies roll out, there are things that are overlapping. And so, you have multiple ways of accessing your messages, multiple ways of accessing your mail, multiple ways of accomplishing all kinds of things. And, and so to, you know, to be able to take the time and set into sort of routines, and creating proper boundaries, so that we're actually able to use technology in the way that it was intended for us to use, rather than it sort of running our lives, because we're spending all this time trying to figure out, you know, sort of, where's that ping coming from? Or that vibration in your pocket? There's really not a vibration, but it's just that sensation of, I must be missing something.

Heidi Forbes Oste 12:02

You know, it's hard, and it's constantly changing, because technology is constantly changing. And we have to adapt. And not everybody is that agile. And so, it takes, it takes a really a conscious effort to be aware of how we respond to those different triggers. And that's really where the balance comes from, is engaging with technology in a very conscious way. So that we recognise when we feel overwhelmed, or we recognise where we feel like, wait a minute, I'm not getting the things done that I need to get done. Why? What is it and then maybe doing what I call sort of a digital elimination diet, where you like, you get rid of everything, that's not absolutely critical for you to function, now that, you know, that's not taking a tech detox in the sense that some people say where they're like, Okay, I'm not gonna have my phone, I'm not going to have my computer, I'm going completely offline, I'm going to go sit in a cabin for a week, that's a different experience. I'm talking about, you know, just identifying what's absolutely crucial for you to function, and then slowly adding things back in to see how you respond to them and

see where they fit in with the requirements of what you need to get done. So that you can really be aware of what's happening. And so, you need to do sort of like a spring cleaning, if you will, every once in a while, you know, and along with that, you know, you need to take care of your devices in that same way. And that's everything from you know, spring cleaning. I don't know about you, but every once in a while, I'm like, why is my phone running slowly? And then you realise, wait a minute, I've got like, 30 apps running at the same time? You know, have I used any of these apps recently? No, I'm only using the top five. It's just you open something and forgotten to close it. So, it's remembering to, to clear off your desktop, clear off your phone, but also shutting it off so that it can fully load all of the updates that are happening in the background?

Louise Wiles 14:15

Yeah, as you say that I'm thinking to myself, 'Oh I really need to do that.' Because I think, also, when you rely on technology so much as I do for work, you know, I have two computers, and they're on most of the time, two Mac's. And you know, I'm using them and I'm working moving between them quite a lot. And I so often see there's an update, and I'll do that tomorrow, I'll do that tomorrow, and then tomorrow and then when it crashes, I'll be very cross with it, but the reason it crashes is because I haven't done the updates, and so that really resonates with me. I suppose one thing that I'm thinking as you say all of that is you know, for people who are relocating and moving and moving their entire belongings and perhaps in a way they do experience a bit of a digital, gap space chance, I guess that's a natural point at which they could really spend a bit of time thinking about their relationship with all their tech and what's necessary, what's not? Yeah. Do you find that you will find when you're moving around that you do that?

Heidi Forbes Oste 15:19

Well, yes. And I also, I mean, as a podcaster, myself, it's one of those things of, Okay what do I absolutely need? When I go to my next location? Am I going to be there for long enough that I'm going to be doing interviews from there? Will I need the technology necessary to make that happen? Or do I intentionally do tech heavy periods prior to the, you know, the times where I'm transitioning? So, for example, we, you know, we have homes in different countries then. And when we move, there's obviously different specs that we need in different places. But it's also, are we going to be there for two weeks? Are we going to be there for two months? And so, what I'm going to be doing during that time, and, you know, is it a vacation time, or am I going there, and I'm just going to be, you know, working. So, I often do, for example, I batch all of my podcast interviews, so that I have them all in advance, I actually take six weeks off every summer. And I, you know, and that is, it's not tech free, but basically my phone becomes a phone and a camera for six weeks. Right? I'm not using it for very much else for six weeks. But I still use it, obviously, I use it for booking tickets, and all of those things. But I'm not trying to, you know, to do social media, other than very occasionally posting and, you know, I, you know, I check my mail, but even that, I, I really try to at that point, use my computer for all of those things. And when I have my phone with me, it's really just a communication tool, and a camera. And, and I think that that's really important, what I've identified for me is that I have such a tech heavy lifestyle, that when I'm, you know, when I'm on vacation, I need to actually take that break. And I, you know, of course need to bring my laptop with me, because I need to continue my business. But it's a very conscious decision when I have a separate laptop, it's a very conscious decision of when I'm working. It's creating those boundaries as to when I'm working and when I'm not.

Louise Wiles 17:31

Yeah, yeah.

Heidi Forbes Oste 17:32

And, and I put my, you know, my laptop can of course, be moved around in my space, but I tried to identify a space within that, in that place, that is my workspace. And then, you know, so that I'm not moving it around, unless I absolutely need to, or if I'm watching a movie, you know, on my laptop, whatever. But, but it's really, you know, it's making those conscious decisions so that we can still, you know, engage as humans, we can still do the things that we love to do and be with the people that we love to be in rather than being driven by the pings and the, you know, the constant sort of notifications. Sure, there's a new bit of news that just launched like, Is it that important for me to know right now?

Heidi Forbes Oste 18:18

You know can it wait, and then I can, you know, choose to in the morning while I'm sipping my coffee, read the news on my laptop. So, it's really from for me, I think, and for every person, it's different. So, I think that's really important to recognise, is, you know, what works for you, I make it very clear in all of my writing and my research, that there is no one way or one tool that is perfect for everyone. Some people need to be online more, some people need to be offline more. And, and some tools work really well for some people and others that is, you know, that is the worst trigger that they could possibly use. So, they need to find an alternate source, or they need to delegate that task to somebody else that can use that tool, if that tool is absolutely essential. And that's the beautiful thing, with you know, technology. And the fact that people are particularly after a year of pandemic where most people have finally, sort of just gotten comfortable with being able to zoom and being able to work remotely is that you can work with virtual assistants from around the globe so that you can get your work covered 24 /7, but you don't physically have to be engaged in it. 24 seven. And so, you know, it's really finding that balance of what do you need to do as an individual and what things can be delegated as well?

Louise Wiles 19:53

Yes. Yeah. And I suppose that's the fantastic thing about technology that there are so many options in that list. And it's funny because you say, you know, it's down to individual preferences. And so, when at the beginning, I was thinking - What am I getting wrong? You know, one of the things that I always say no to is notifications, I just don't have notifications because that drives me mad. So, I just always say notifications off, if I want to find out what's happening on various accounts, I actually go and look. Now that could be a bit of a waste of my time, because I have to physically go to that platform and look, but it just keeps me sane and my inbox kind of controllable. So, that works for me. But as you say, it might not work for other people. I'm really interested then as in terms of, you know, relocation, living abroad, what kind of tech hacks have you, or do you use regularly, that help you to manage everything? And are there any suggestions you can make to people, people who listen to this podcast are living internationally are mobile.

Heidi Forbes Oste 20:58

So, I mean, one of the things that I love to use that I think is, you know, it's just folders, it's like just using organisation tools that are available to you. Without ordering, you know, without having a new

app or anything. You know, most smartphones give you the ability to put things into folders. And so for I, for example, I have a folder on each of my, on each of my devices, but particularly on my phone, that is for the apps that are specific to each area that I go to on a regular basis, so that I have all the local apps that I need, when I come to that new location. So, I have the bus app. So, I can find it by my bus ticket, I have the you know, the phone company app, because I have two different SIM cards. So, if I'm having an issue with my phone, I can, you know, dial into that right away, or, you know, the local, the local order line, if I want to order takeout food, you know that that's different, because there's different apps that are used in different markets. So, little tools like that can make your life very much more simplified, rather than if you're, you know, if you have them all bunched together, that can be really challenging. And same with travel apps, I have a folder that's just travel apps, for the airlines, another one that shows for trains, that kind of thing. It just makes things a little bit easier because you know where to go to to get the information that you need, instead of constantly having to scroll around and try to find it. Another tool that I love that I started using actually, while I was doing my dissertation years ago. I started using it as a way to when I was as a research tool for any time, I came across interesting things, I would put them in buckets as the best way for me to describe it. But you know, in the old days, you know, when I did my undergrad, it was like you put them in a file folder. Well, thank goodness, like a physical file folder. Yeah. So, you know, so I use Evernote, which I mean, that's just a tool that works really well for me there are other Some people use Google Docs. I, I particularly like Evernote because it's secure. And so that that works really well for me, combination of Evernote and Dropbox because sometimes it's you know, a big file that I need. But if it's just taking notes, I have in Evernote, I have a file or a sort of a note taking thing for each city that I go to, even if I'm just visiting. And I put, you know, the restaurants that I go to that I want to remember for next time or the shops where I bought a certain thing that I loved, that I want to remember. And it's just a way it's like a brain dump for me, because then it's like, okay, I can forget about it. But if somebody asked me, hey, well, you know, where'd you get that scarf, it's like, Oh you know what? I think I found that in Istanbul and I really - this tiny little shop and I know Oh, it's like I just open up my Evernote and I got I got it from here

Louise Wiles 24:02

Fantastic

Heidi Forbes Oste 24:07

Um, little things like that, or you know, you get a servant, you find a service provider that you absolutely love. You know, just being able to keep track of those things. Those are the things that can be really helpful to you and to your peers, which builds relationships and builds trust. It's sort of that you know, we're in the process for global Nomad hacks our other podcasts on collecting all of this data around the different products and services that we love and use to be able to share with our community because people are always asking, like, what do you use? Where did you find these things? And it's like, oh, wait a minute. A lot of these organisations like I would love to promote them and help them, you know, help other people find them. And so, we've been busy collecting between our team, everybody's been collecting sort of lists and then reaching out to the companies and developing affiliate relationships with them. So, that it's win:win, we help share, you know, how people can find them. And, and, you know, they either give us, you know, help us with getting a discount on our future products or, or they just, you know, or we in some cases, we get paid a small amount which basically subsidises the podcast. I mean, it's not big amounts of money, but it's win:win for everybody. And they often will give a

discount to our, you know, to the people that we send them to. So, it's, you know, it's really learning how to use these systems that the technology enables you to do, because being able to use a tracking code that we never were able to do before, it was like, oh, coupon, here's a physical coupon with a code on it. And then if you're lucky, somebody enters it into the database. And you there's no way of tracking that relationship. And now we have this beautiful thing to be able to do that. And so,

Louise Wiles 25:57

Yeah. And I love that collating idea. And I suppose what you're saying is that, you know, technology is that means for us to collate information. And as you say that I'm a terrible one for scribbling on pieces of paper. And I'm trying to educate myself to scribble into notes on word but Evernotes would be good.

Heidi Forbes Oste 26:18

Here's another trick for you. So. So two things. One is, while Evernote or whatever app you're using, you can scan your notes.

Louise Wiles 26:27

Yeah.

Heidi Forbes Oste 26:28

So, whenever I get an invoice or anything, like, you know, pay for parking, or whatever, that I know, there's gonna be like, I just scan it. It's like, coz it used to be all those little pieces of paper, then it's like, Oh God, where'd they go? Well, I know I wrote it down. And, you know, you got to tag it. But so, I don't know if you have ever seen these. I know, you're not visual, it's not a video podcast, but I'm just showing you this so that you can physically see it. It's a little notebook. But it's by a company called Rocket Book. Right?

Louise Wiles 26:57

Okay.

Heidi Forbes Oste 26:59

And you just, you have like these erasable pens. I know you can get these in Europe too, these pilot friction pens.

Louise Wiles 27:05

Oh yes, my children use them.

Heidi Forbes Oste 27:06

To write and these notebooks, right. And so, any way you scan these in, it goes directly into Evernote, and it's searchable,

Louise Wiles 27:14

Reallym Oh, my goodness, okay. I have to rethink using Evernote.

Heidi Forbes Oste 27:20

I mean, there's other tools that's just particularly the one that I use, but it's called Rocket Book. And they have a bunch of different formats. And I love them, I used them all through when I was doing my PhD, I would take my notes, and you know, handwritten notes, which help, actually with your cognition and memory, to do the handwritten notes rather than typing. And then I would do the scan, and it, you know it recognises my handwriting, and then I just, you know, put the tags in it, put it in the right folder, and boom, it's done. And, I mean, the beauty of that kind of fluidity of the technology where you're doing them manually, you know, you're using the old school techniques, which I think we all need more often, because I went through a period, right, I was doing everything from a keyboard. And then I had to sign all these documents, and it was like, my hands getting so tired. And I realized, that there was something that was really, it's quite powerful to actually use a pen and paper for cognition.

Louise Wiles 28:25

And there is something that misses I think as I type, I don't know why. And I have that thing with my children, because one of them uses, she doesn't, she doesn't write particularly quickly. So, she uses word processing for a lot of things. But I wonder whether there's something in understanding that doesn't quite connect in quite the same way as when you're doing it, you know, and perhaps drawing diagrams physically with your pen and thinking it through as I would and did in my youth many years ago.

Heidi Forbes Oste 28:57

I remember when I was doing my MBA in Brussels, and I used to get these, you know, the grid notebooks, you know, for graphing, and I would take all of my notes in those in pencil. And then when I was studying, I would rewrite the notes in pen and erase the pencil. And it was, it was more for just sort of redoing it in my brain. And people used to pay me for my notes, because they were so good. But it was that process of just, you know, writing it once and then rewriting it that really cemented it in my brain and I never had to study because it was like, I just that was my studying. I didn't have to sort of memorise because of that. And I think that's a really important skill for that a lot of our kids are missing out on they're not doing the written, particularly in this last year, there's just not that handwritten piece.

Louise Wiles 30:04

No, no, everything's been online.

Heidi Forbes Oste 30:07

And I think, you know, it's unfortunate they, and they are, you know, that's not to say they're not learning, but they, it can be easier for them, and every brain is different of course, for some people, typing is perfectly fine. But like you said, with the word processing, sometimes those tools can become a handicap, that we don't learn how to do the grammar correctly, or the spelling correctly, if it's constantly being corrected for us. And I mean, I love those tools, because they are great when you're writing really fast. But then you also have to make sure you sometimes read over them, because sometimes the autocorrect is not really accurate.

Louise Wiles 30:46

Or it interprets the words in the wrong way. And suddenly the sentences don't make sense, and you don't realise.

Heidi Forbes Oste 30:51

If you're multilingual, it's a mess. Because I mean, I often forget that my keyboard is in Swedish. And I'll write something in English. And, or I think I'm writing in English, and it's trying to autocorrect and figure out what I'm saying in Swedish. And so, it ends up this complete, probably, I'm like what is that, and then I realised that's what that it was actually, I need to switch the keyboard back to English.

Louise Wiles 31:15

Yeah, yeah. Just talking about the kids studying there. But one topic that always comes up in relation to technology is kind of the amount of time kids spend on technology. And I know, part of the audience that will be listening to this are parents, they probably had this thought themselves. So, what's your take on, you know, when technology is becoming addictive? And perhaps what parents can do to encourage their kids to take time out? not spend quite so much time?

Heidi Forbes Oste 31:50

Yeah, you know, I mean, like I said before, I think, and keep in mind, when I refer to technology addiction, or digital addiction, it's really to the severe extreme. It's not just like, 'Oh, you know, I want I want my phone, I need my phone with me all the time.' It's, a serious psychological problem.

Heidi Forbes Oste 32:11

And it has to do with your neurotransmitters firing and correctly and all kinds of things, and it messes with your serotonin. Very different thing. Right. So, but what is, you know, kids are no different than adults in that it's important for them to have a conscious relationship with technology. So, the best thing that you can do with them is like with any relationship, if they have a toxic friendship, it's the same thing, it's helping them recognise how that relationship is, is, is affecting them. So is it, you know, is are there good, there's always some good sides and bad sides, you know, and again, that pendulum can swing around, but I think the most important thing to do is to help them recognise their own behaviour, and their own relationship with technology. And so maybe that's doing a, you know, sort of a, a, you know, an elimination diet to help them, you know, you can do it together as a family, you can sit down and sort of work around what are the best way to create really some healthy boundaries? You know, it's easier said than done to say, 'Okay, well, no phones at the dinner table and know this and know that and, you know, you can't have phones in your bedroom.' Yeah, like that was ever going to happen after a pandemic. I mean, reality is, they're gonna have phones in their bedrooms, you know, but the important thing is helping them recognise how that's impacting them. So, you know, it's giving them a chance to practice what happens when it's away and recognising when they have a physiological sort of response to that. And so, it's really more about helping them know themselves, which is what we do as parents, right? It's helping our kids evolve as adults. It's not about sort of making rules that say, 'this is the only way to go.' And, and by the way, I mean, I'm Gen X, but I have Gen Z kids. Gen X is the worst. We're the worst, because we're trying to both do things digitally and manually at the same time. You know, the millennials do everything digitally, and they don't know how to do anything manually. The Gen Z kids are really, I mean, I find my kids are the ones that are saying, 'Get off your phone.'

Heidi Forbes Oste 32:12

We have that at the table definitely. It's often my husband is the one that picks up his phone. They're like, No! We do have a no phones at the table rule and they're both very good at it. We're not so good. Yeah,

Heidi Forbes Oste 34:55

No, I mean, I, you know, I see my kids, they go out to dinner with their friends and they put the phones in the middle of the table. And if anybody pulls their phone up in the middle of the table without having a very valid excuse,

Louise Wiles 35:08

That's really good, isn't it? Brilliant?

Heidi Forbes Oste 35:10

They have to buy around two drinks for everybody. There's a little incentive. Fortunately, they're under-age. So that round of drinks is not something huge, that will change. Anyway. But the point is, they're very aware of that. And they're aware of, you know, the time the value of that time that they have, when they're together doing something. And sure, you know, they'll sit there, and they'll do their Tik Toks, and they'll do their Instagrams, but a lot of times they're doing it together. It's for them, it's a very social thing. And I think for those of us who are not digital natives, but really learned technology later, it's much more, you know, when you come into your phone, and I say come into your phone, it's like, there's like a bubble around you and the rest of the world is shut out. Versus like, oh, come check out this video with me. And you're sitting next to someone head-to-head.

Louise Wiles 36:13

Yeah, yeah.

Heidi Forbes Oste 36:15

Which is a very different way to engage in with the technology.

Louise Wiles 36:18

And also, I noticed during the lockdown, so we've had, you know, the technology has been such a fantastic way of just connecting and sharing the experience with friends. And then they go on Tik Tok together, you know, but it's fun, and there's giggles and laughter and no soft and I'd walk past my kids bedrooms in they're on online schooling, but they're also they've got on their iPads with friends, and they're doing the work together. Fine, that as though they're in a class. And they're giggling and having fun together and that's just so important. So, yeah, I've really learnt to see the positive in technology, actually, through the last year in a way that perhaps I hadn't appreciated before. Before, I was more concerned about what you're on your phone so much time, and really, can't be too good. And actually, they police it themselves, you know, they'll say, my youngest daughter gives me her phone at bedtime, you know, she'll say come up at nine 9:30 and she hands over to me just so she doesn't spend half the night on her phone.

Heidi Forbes Oste 37:20

We can certainly as parents, there's certain things that we can do to help them in that process to build that relationship. And, I mean, it's like with all parts of their lives, it's really understanding how to teach them boundaries, around what's healthy. But it's also practising what we preach, right? Yes. You know, in our house, we try to have a docking station where all devices go at night. Does it always work? Not necessarily, but it's a conscious decision to not leave it on the docking station, right. And I find that, you know, for the most part, everybody in my family is pretty good about it. I would say my daughter's probably the least but she's also the most extroverted, she needs that constant interaction with her friends. So, either they're spending the night and they're up until 2am. Or they're on the phone until 2am it's really not going to make that difference, it may be through a mediated tool, but they're going to be talking until 2am. Anyway. Whereas the rest of the family, we, you know, we put our phones on the docking station, and we do that partially to keep the electromagnetic frequencies out of the bedroom. Right? Because you sleep better without that. But not everybody is super sensitive to it. And that, again, that's knowing yourself and, and really getting a sense of, you know, what feels like healthy boundaries. And I, you know, I have, there's a fun chapter in the book that I was working with a friend of mine who's much more in the woowoo space, and we were sort of joking around, because, you know, I was like, well, I need to do this piece about consciousness and technology. And I was like, but, you know, and I really appreciate the woowoo side, I'm just not that woowoo, but I have a lot of woowoo friends, but I do believe very strongly in the importance of consciousness. And anyway, so we got into this whole conversation about treating technology as if it was a sentient being. And really just understanding that, you know, if you look at that relationship, at a more, rather than object, but much more subject and that you have more respect for each other, then comes a very different relationship. And it's really important, I think, for all of us to really just occasionally step out of that comfort zone and really look at how are we engaging with it, and are there toxic triggers there? Are there things that that we're not doing that are, you know, that are not very kind to our technologies, right? It's not just about them being mean to us right now, it's a two-way street. So, you know, it's everything from like do you have a good case for your phone? So, it's not getting damaged, right? Turning your devices off and giving them rest and giving yourself rest, all of those little pieces can actually have a huge impact on your relationship with technology. And it's about building those boundaries and being kind. And so, you know, we all could use a little bit of that no matter whether it's with our technology or with other individuals.

Louise Wiles 40:32

No, and that that part of your book really did kind of touch a chord with me, though, because I'd never thought of thinking about technology in that way before. But it does make a lot of sense, a lot of sense. I need to remember, remind myself, do the things that prompted me to think about but, and update my computer's definitely that I do need to do. But I'm conscious of time. And this has just been so fascinating. You've really triggered a lot of thoughts for me around technology and how we manage it and our relationship with it. I'm just wondering to finish the conversation. In your book, at the end, you have a quote from Khaili Gibran, hope I pronounced that name correctly. "Progress lies not in enhancing what is but enhancing towards what will be." So, I'm wondering, what are your predictions for the next 10 years? You know, if I were talking to you in 10 years-time, how will technology have moved on? Perhaps in terms of our relationship with technology?

Heidi Forbes Oste 41:35

Well, I think it will become a lot more fluid. And, I think that, you know, we're going through a fast growth period here. And I mean, not to say that it's going to slow down. But part of it is us catching up with being comfortable with that fast growth. And I think the mindset shift that a lot of us need to continue to go through is not, you know, what, if, but when, and to really start looking at things for, you know, instead of being afraid of, sort of, you know, what, if that happens, it's more just embracing? Well, when that happens, this is what's going to be, you know, this is, this is what is possible. And in an example, I've been in a lot of conversations recently about the augmented reality, but more in the sense of a mixed reality experience. So, you and I are having this conversation over zoom, and we are in different continents, but it won't be long before we'll be able to have this conversation and I'm going to see you physically in the space that I'm in in a 3d form and be able to have a conversation with you and feel as if you're right there, I'll be able to see your interactions and the way that you respond. But it won't feel as if I'm speaking to a screen, it's going to be mixed in with the environment that I'm in. And we'll see a lot more of that and sounds very sort of Star Trek and, you know, whatever Star Wars, very science fiction, but the reality is, that's where we're going to, and I'm really looking forward to that personally. Because it's like the technology the right now that we have, for example, in our phones, that we can dictate, and we can have it dictated back to us, which means we don't have to be craning our heads down to look at a screen anymore. We can be driving and still looking at the road, we can be having a conversation with someone else, or engaging with the world, and not have to look down at a screen, because it may be either projected on our glasses, or it may be something that we can, you know, throw up a direction somewhere. But it keeps us from being limited by a small screen space, but still able to engage with the content in a really a real way. So, I think we're gonna see more and more evolution in that way where we're not going to be confined to the physical screens anymore. And I think that, you know, and things, you know, in so many different ways, that's just one little piece, but in so many more ways, we're going to this is just the infancy of what technology can do for us, right. And, and we'll be able to, for example, receive medical treatments through resonance, through sound. We are already seeing a lot of that. So, there's a lot of things that you know, you'll be able to get remote treatment by getting resonance treatment, and that's obviously not for everything. But there are a lot of things that can be treated that way, particularly in mental health, which is a huge problem. And I think part of it is also that transparency where when we as people start to engage because we've had to. I look at my at my 82 year old mother is a master at zoom, she goes to church on zoom, she works out on zoom. She, I mean, she's on zoom, she takes art classes on zoom, she's, she's on zoom all day long. And then she goes out and has a walk in the woods. And, you know, she gets out and her fresh air. But before it was like, 'Oh, God, you know, you want me to FaceTime You? Okay? She dictates everything into her phone. And you know that level of comfort we're starting to see people that in the populations that we never thought would do it. And so, if we can continue that boost of comfort, which, you know, will make rolling out new technologies, and having new possibilities, so much easier and better. So, I think,

Louise Wiles 45:54

Yeah, wow, exciting times. And I could go into a whole realm about working from home, and you know, how technology is going to develop to support that. But that's a conversation for a different day. But that's something I've been really interested in reading reports about, you know, some of the things that

some of the companies are doing with virtual reality headsets, for people working at home but that's another conversation. Time to bring this on to a close. If people would like to connect with you, where can they go to learn more about you?

Heidi Forbes Oste 46:24

Sure. So, my main landing spaces, is to 2balanceU.com. You can get to both of my podcasts from there. And there's also a contact page. But if you're interested in the podcast, Evolving Digital Self is really fun. I've been interviewing people across different industries, about their human relationship with technology and how it's changing the way we work and live. So, there's some really fun, interesting conversations there. And then for your audience, I think you might also be interested in Global Nomad Hacks, where we talk about all the great hacks and that make living the expat lifestyle and raising global citizens possible

Louise Wiles 47:10

So brilliant, great. And as usual, I'll put links to those in the show notes and the blog post that goes out with this. So, thank you so much for your time today. It has been really lovely. I've really enjoyed that. You've expanded my relationship and my whole thinking around technology through reading your book, and then also this conversation. So, thank you so much.

Heidi Forbes Oste 47:36

You're most welcome. It's been my pleasure.

Louise Wiles 47:38

Thank you.

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