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FORWARD

R E H E A R S A L F O R W A R

LET THE SCREEN HELP !

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At People 4 People Productions, we often say that **narrative power** is civic power. The screens that surround us — phones, tablets, laptops, televisions — are not neutral. They are shaping how we think, how we feel, how we see one another, and ultimately how we participate in democracy.

The upcoming article, **Rehearsal For War**, arrives at a critical moment.

Across our communities, young people are **navigating unprecedented levels of anxiety**, digital saturation, misinformation, and social comparison. Adults are struggling to keep pace with technological change. Families are asking **difficult questions** about social media, mental health, and the role of technology in daily life.

And educators are confronting the **urgent need** to teach not just **content** — but **discernment**. This 4- part blog series invites readers to slow down and reconsider **a powerful question**:

What if the screen could help — instead of harm?

Rather than positioning technology as **the enemy**, this article challenges us to think more deeply about **intentional use**, guided engagement, and film media literacy as a form of **protection** and **empowerment**. At P4PP, we believe that the issue is not simply screen time — it is **screen consciousness**.

As you move through this series, you will encounter themes that sit at the heart of our mission:

- **The psychological impact of images**
- **Youth identity formation in digital spaces**
- **The tension between consumption and creation**
- **The role of adults as guides, not gatekeepers**
- **The urgent connection between film media literacy and mental well-being**

In many ways, this article, echoes the spirit of our **Own The Story Initiative** — the belief that young people must not only **navigate** media systems but actively **shape** them.

Screens are today's **public square**. If we abandon that space, we surrender it. If we **engage it** with wisdom, structure, and community, we **transform** it.

This journey is not about **fear**. It is about **responsibility**. It is about helping families, educators, and youth move from **passive scrolling** to purposeful **storytelling**. From digital **overwhelm** to digital agency. From isolation to **informed participation**.

We invite you to read **each installment** carefully. Share it with family and friends. Discuss it with young people. **Reflect** on your own digital habits. And consider how film media literacy can serve as a **stabilizing force** in a time of **narrative volatility**.

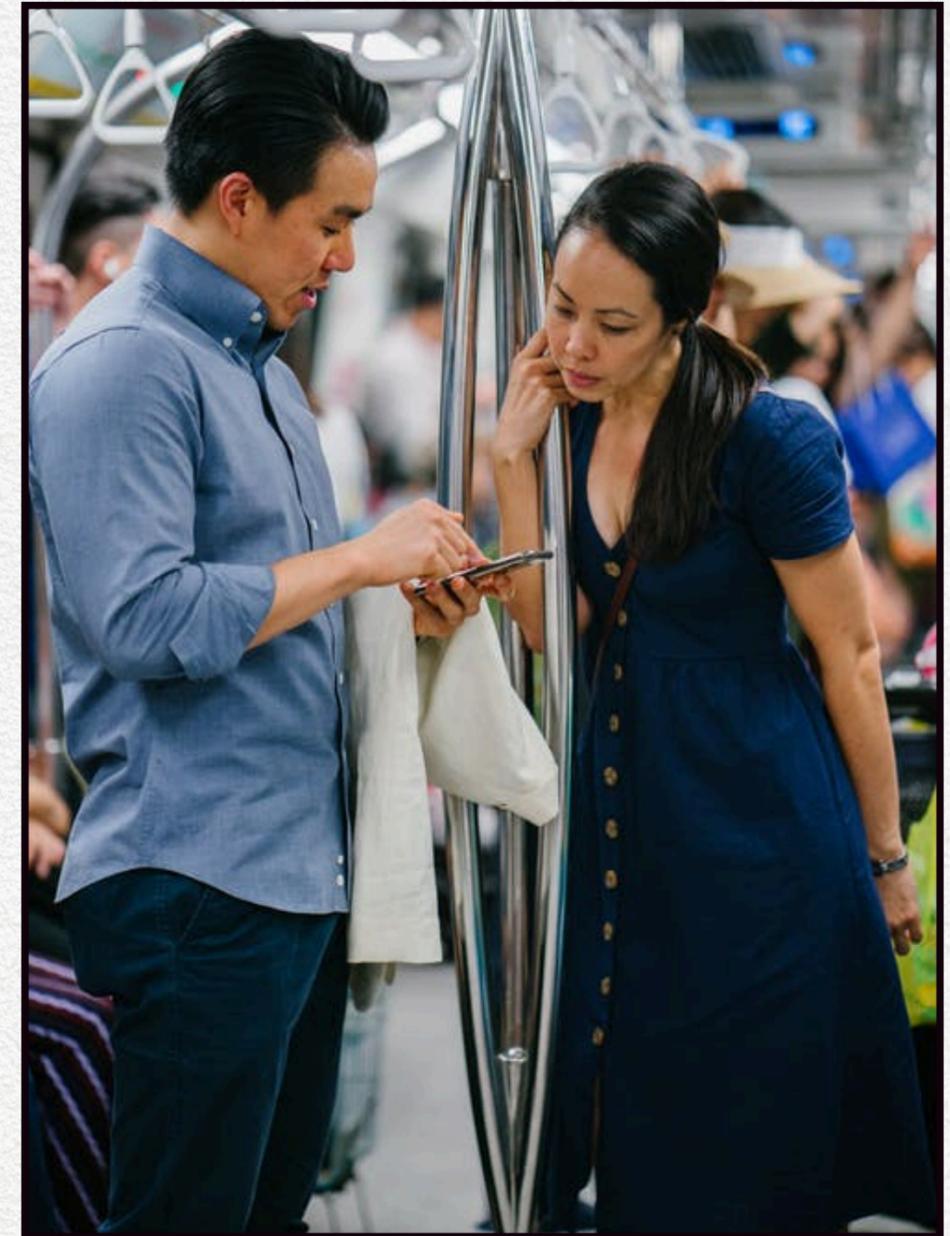
Because when guided with **intention**, the screen does not have to divide us. It can help us see more **clearly**. And seeing clearly is where **civic strength** begins.

PT.I THE SCREEN IS NOT NEUTRAL

We wake up to it. We carry it in our pockets. We fall asleep beside it. The screen is no longer an accessory to life — **it is an environment.** For today's young people, identity formation, friendship, learning, comparison, and cultural belonging are mediated through glowing rectangles that never power down. Yet we rarely pause to ask what **constant exposure** to curated images, viral narratives, and algorithmic persuasion is quietly shaping inside of us. Before we can teach young people how to use screens wisely, we must first understand that screens **are not neutral. They are influence.**

Reflective Question:

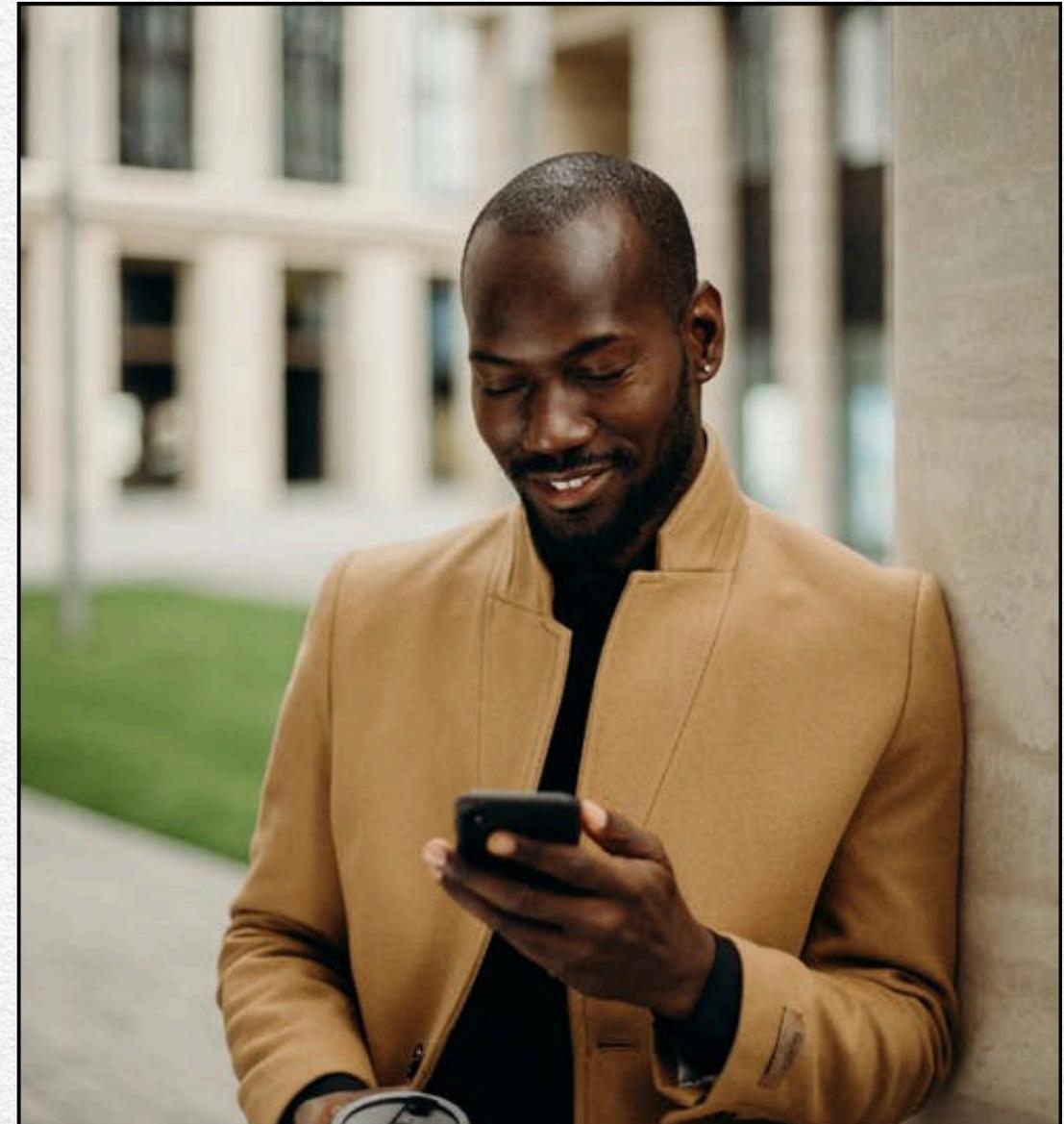
What messages are shaping you each day — and who decided those messages should appear in front of you?



PART II: WHEN SCREENS HARM — AND WHY

It is easy to blame “**too much screen time.**” Harder — but more honest — is asking what kind of screen time young people are experiencing. Endless scrolling. **Comparison culture.** Performative identity. Manufactured outrage. Misinformation moving faster than reflection. When digital spaces are unstructured and unexamined, they can distort self-worth, amplify **anxiety**, and reward reaction over reason. The issue is not simply exposure — it is passivity. And passivity in the digital age comes at a psychological cost.

Reflective Question:
When you scroll, do you feel informed and grounded — or reactive and diminished?

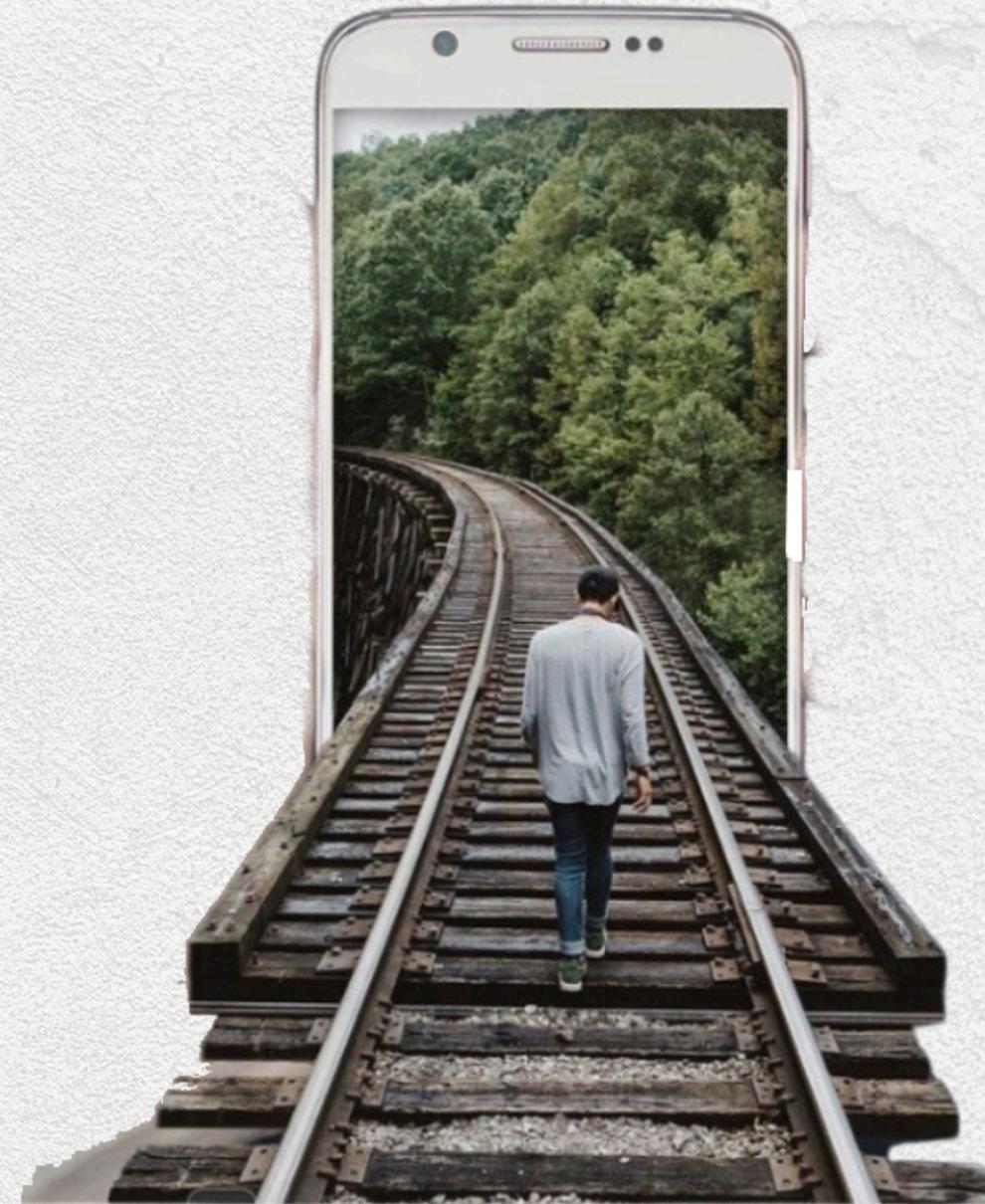


PART III: LET THE SCREEN HELP

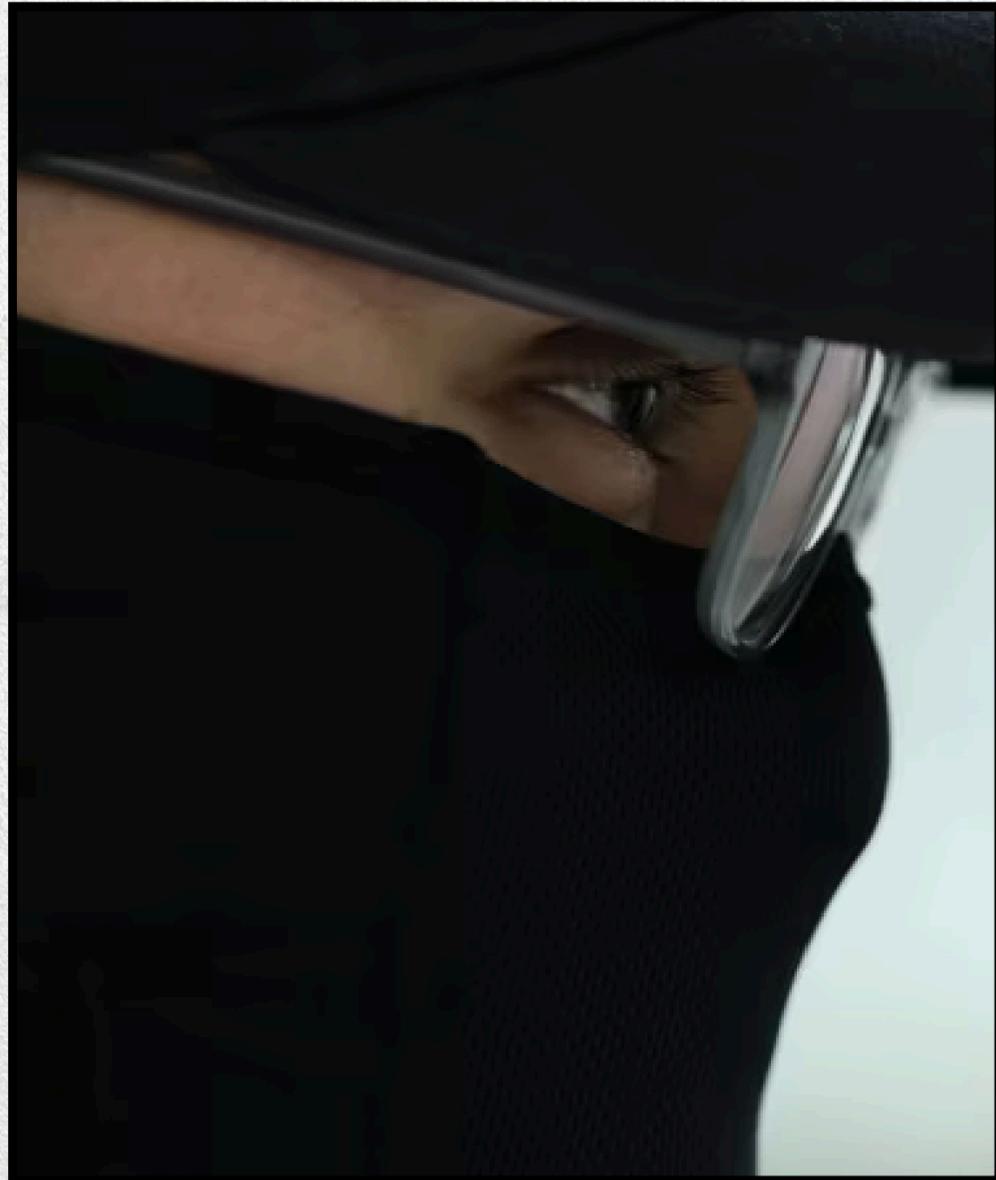
But what if we are asking the **wrong question**? What if the goal is not restriction alone — but redirection? Screens can inform, connect, teach, and inspire when engagement is **intentional and guided**. They can become tools for **creativity** rather than consumption, for inquiry rather than **impulse**. When young people are taught to question images, analyze narratives, and create their own stories, the screen **transforms** from a source of overwhelm into a platform for agency. The difference is not the device. It is the **discipline**.

Reflective Question:

How might your relationship with technology change if you approached it as a tool to create — not just consume?



PART IV: RECLAIMING THE DIGITAL PUBLIC SQUARE



Screens are today's **public square**. They shape elections, movements, friendships, cultural norms, and mental health. We cannot afford to abandon that space — and we cannot afford to leave young people alone inside it. **Reclaiming digital culture** requires more than parental controls; it requires **education, modeling, and collective responsibility**. When families, educators, and communities teach film media literacy as a **life skill** — not an afterthought — the screen becomes something else entirely: a tool for **clarity, civic participation, and shared responsibility** in a fragmented time.

Reflective Question:

What responsibility do we share in shaping the digital spaces the next generation will inherit?