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**FORWARD**  
**REHEARSAL FOR WAR**  
**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:**

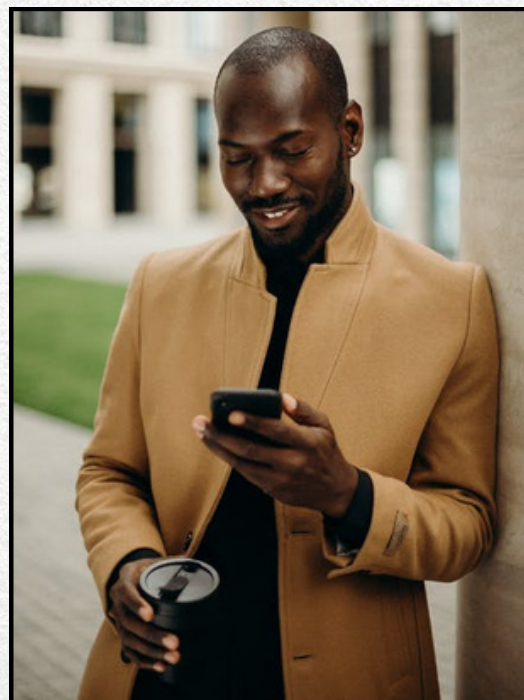
What messages are shaping you each day — and who decided those messages should appear in front of you?

## 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?