



ACTION ARMY FIELD MANUAL NO. 7

THE POCKET CURSE

CHILDHOOD INTERNET ADDICTION— THE CONSEQUENCES, THE CURSES, AND THE CURES
THAT WORK IN A REAL HOUSE

THE POCKET WAS SUPPOSED TO HOLD TOOLS. NOT THE CHILD.

THIS IS THE COMPANION TO THE BROADCAST. IT IS FREE. IT ALWAYS HAS
BEEN.

USE IS NOT CAPTURE. THIS MANUAL HELPS YOU TELL THE DIFFERENCE —
AND THEN DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT TONIGHT.

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NOT MEDICAL OR LEGAL ADVICE. IF A CHILD IS IN CRISIS — MOOD COLLAPSE, TALK OF SELF-
HARM, TOTAL WITHDRAWAL — GET LOCAL MEDICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH HELP FIRST. IN THE
U.S., CALL OR TEXT 988.



START HERE

YOU DO NOT NEED A HEADLINE TO TRUST WHAT YOU SEE IN YOUR OWN KITCHEN.

WORK THIS MANUAL IN ORDER:

- ☐ **SCORE THE EIGHT TELLS — PAGE 3.**
- ☐ **READ THE SEVEN CURSES SO YOU CAN NAME WHAT YOU ARE FIGHTING — PAGE 4.**
- ☐ **START THE TWO-WEEK LOG — PAGE 5. FACTS, NOT GUILT.**
- ☐ **RUN THE 30-MINUTE RESET — PAGE 6. TONIGHT.**
- ☐ **POST THE HOUSE STANDARD AND SIGN IT — PAGE 10.**

SCORING THE TELLS:

THREE OR MORE — YOU TIGHTEN THE RULES THIS WEEK.

FIVE OR MORE — YOU TREAT IT LIKE A HOUSEHOLD EMERGENCY PLAN, NOT A VIBE.

THIS PLAN IS FOR THE HOUSE OF: _____

WE START ON (DATE): _____



THE EIGHT TELLS

- ☐ 1. SLEEP IS BROKEN. UP LATE ON THE SCREEN. CANNOT WAKE. LYING ABOUT BEING ASLEEP.
- ☐ 2. WITHDRAWAL RAGE. TAKING THE DEVICE CAUSES EXPLOSIONS OUT OF PROPORTION. DISAPPOINTMENT IS NORMAL — PANIC IS A TELL.
- ☐ 3. LIFE OFFSCREEN SHRINKS. HOBBIES DIE. IN-PERSON FRIENDS FADE. THE ONLY JOY LEFT IS THE GLOW.
- ☐ 4. SCHOOL SLIPS WHILE THE SCREEN THRIVES. GRADES DOWN. TEACHER NOTES. HOMEWORK THAT CANNOT HAPPEN NEAR A PHONE.
- ☐ 5. SECRECY AND LYING. HIDDEN APPS. SECOND ACCOUNTS. DELETED HISTORIES. PASSWORDS YOU ARE NOT ALLOWED TO KNOW.
- ☐ 6. MOOD TETHERED TO THE MACHINE. FINE ONLINE. FLAT, ANXIOUS, OR HOSTILE OFFLINE.
- ☐ 7. CONTENT TOO OLD, TOO DARK, OR TOO SEXUAL FOR THEIR AGE — AND THEY DEFEND IT LIKE A LIFELINE.
- ☐ 8. THE FAMILY CANNOT FUNCTION WITHOUT A FIGHT OVER THE SCREEN. EVERY RIDE. EVERY MEAL. EVERY BEDTIME.

TELLS CHECKED TODAY: _____ **DATE:** _____

WHAT I ACTUALLY SAW THIS WEEK:



THE SEVEN CURSES

1. INFINITE SUPPLY. A BOOK ENDS. A BALL GAME ENDS. THE FEED DOES NOT END UNLESS A HUMAN ENDS IT.
2. VARIABLE REWARD. SOMETIMES BORING, SOMETIMES ELECTRIC. THE BRAIN LEARNS TO CHASE THE MAYBE.
3. SOCIAL RANKING. LIKES, VIEWS, STREAKS, READ RECEIPTS. WORTH METERED IN PUBLIC BY STRANGERS WITH THUMBS.
4. COMPARISON WITHOUT CONTEXT. EVERYBODY ELSE'S HIGHLIGHT REEL AGAINST YOUR KID'S UNEDITED TUESDAY.
5. FEAR OF MISSING OUT, WEAPONIZED. THE GROUP CHAT PUNISHES ABSENCE, SO THE CHILD STAYS PLUGGED IN TO AVOID EXILE.
6. IDENTITY CAPTURE. THE ALGORITHM LEARNS THE APPETITE AND BUILDS A TUNNEL AROUND IT. THE CHILD THINKS THEY ARE CHOOSING.
7. PARENT EXHAUSTION AS A FEATURE. THE DEVICE QUIETS THE CAR AND ENDS THE ARGUMENT. THE CURSE LOVES A BUSY PARENT.

THE CURSE IS NOT THAT THE INTERNET EXISTS. THE CURSE IS HANDING A CHILD AN OPEN FIRE HOSE AND ACTING SURPRISED WHEN THEY DROWN.

THE CURSE WORKING HARDEST IN MY HOUSE:



THE TWO-WEEK LOG

WRITE DOWN WHAT YOU ACTUALLY SEE FOR FOURTEEN DAYS. TAKE THIS PAGE TO THE PEDIATRICIAN OR THE SCHOOL.

DAY	SCREEN OFF (TIME)	HOURS SLEPT	MELTDOWN? Y/N	SCHOOL / HOMEWORK	NOTES
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					

PATTERN I SEE AFTER TWO WEEKS:



TONIGHT: THE 30-MINUTE RESET

☐ PICK THE CHARGING STATION — OUTSIDE EVERY BEDROOM.
WHERE: _____

☐ SET THE NIGHTLY DOCK TIME. ALL DEVICES LAND AT:
_____ P.M.

☐ NO PHONES AT THE TABLE. STARTING WITH TONIGHT'S DINNER.

☐ HOMEWORK LAND — PHONE IN ANOTHER ROOM. WHERE:

☐ NO DEVICES IN THE FIRST HOUR AFTER WAKING IF MORNINGS
ARE A WAR.

☐ TELL THE CHILD THE STANDARD OUT LOUD, ONCE, CALMLY.
THEN ENFORCE IT THE SAME WAY TUESDAY AND SATURDAY.

☐ PUT YOUR OWN PHONE IN THE STATION WHERE THEY CAN SEE
YOU DO IT.

**EXPECT A FIGHT ON NIGHT ONE AND NIGHT TWO. THE FIGHT IS NOT
PROOF YOU ARE WRONG. IT IS PROOF THE HOOK WAS REAL.**

WHAT HAPPENED THE FIRST THREE NIGHTS:



PARENTS OWN THE PHONES, TABLETS, CONSOLES, AND LOGINS THEY PAY FOR. LIST EVERY GLOWING RECTANGLE IN THE HOUSE.

IF THAT SOUNDS EXTREME — REMEMBER WHO HAS THE DEVELOPING BRAIN AND WHO HAS THE CREDIT CARD.



THE SEATBELTS

THESE ARE NOT MEAN. LEARN THEM THIS WEEK — NOT SOMEDAY.

- ☐ PARENTAL CONTROLS TURNED ON AT THE DEVICE LEVEL (PHONE, TABLET, CONSOLE, TV).
- ☐ WEEKLY SCREEN TIME REPORT SENT TO A PARENT — AND ACTUALLY READ.
- ☐ APP LIMITS AND DOWNTIME HOURS SET TO MATCH THE DOCK TIME.
- ☐ ROUTER SCHEDULE — THE HOUSE INTERNET SLEEPS WHEN THE HOUSE SLEEPS.
- ☐ SCHOOL-ONLY PROFILE OR SCHOOL MODE ON THE DEVICE USED FOR HOMEWORK.
- ☐ APP STORE PURCHASES AND DOWNLOADS REQUIRE A PARENT PASSWORD.
- ☐ AGE SETTINGS AND CONTENT FILTERS CHECKED ON EVERY ACCOUNT — INCLUDING THE OLD ONES.
- ☐ ROSTER CHECK: I KNOW WHICH APPS ARE ON THE DEVICE AND WHO IS IN THE CHATS.

CONTROLS BUY YOU TIME. THEY DO NOT RAISE THE CHILD. THAT IS STILL YOUR JOB.

CONTROLS I STILL HAVE TO LEARN THIS WEEK:



REPLACE WHAT YOU REMOVE

YOU CANNOT DELETE AN ADDICTION AND LEAVE A HOLE SHAPED LIKE A FEED. PUT IT ON THE CALENDAR WITH A DAY AND A TIME. IF IT IS NOT ON THE CALENDAR, IT IS NOT A CURE YET.

WHAT	DAY	TIME	WHO GOES WITH THEM

IDEAS: WALKS. SPORTS. MUSIC. CHURCH. CHORES THAT MATTER. BOARD GAMES. A JOB. A CLUB. READING. FRIENDS IN PERSON. BOREDOM ON PURPOSE.



THE HOUSE STANDARD

WRITE IT. POST IT ON THE FRIDGE. THE CURSE HATES CLARITY.

IN THIS HOUSE, DEVICES ARE TOOLS — NOT OWNERS.

SLEEP BEATS STREAKS. SCHOOL BEATS FEEDS. FAMILY EYES BEAT
CHAT EYES.

DEVICES DOCK EVERY NIGHT AT _____

DEVICE-FREE ZONES IN THIS HOUSE:

SCREEN TIME IS EARNED AFTER:

THE ONE RULE WE WILL NOT BEND:

SIGNED — THE ADULTS AND THE KIDS. EVERYBODY LIVES BY IT,
INCLUDING ME.

X _____

X _____

X _____

DATE _____



ONE LINE, ONE HOUSE

THE CURSE LOVES DIVIDED ADULTS. ONE SAYS NO, THE OTHER SNUCK-YESSES TO KEEP THE PEACE. ONE RULE, ENFORCED THE SAME WAY EVERY DAY, BEATS A THOUSAND SPEECHES.

- ☐ BOTH ADULTS HAVE READ THIS MANUAL AND AGREE ON THE DOCK TIME.
- ☐ THE OTHER HOUSE — IF THERE IS ONE — KNOWS THE RULE AND HOLDS IT.
- ☐ GRANDPARENTS BRIEFED: IF YOU HAND THE TABLET BACK THE MINUTE MOM SAYS NO, YOU ARE NOT THE FUN HOUSE — YOU ARE THE HOLE IN THE DAM.
- ☐ SITTERS, COACHES, AND CARPOOLS KNOW THE PHONE RULE.

SINGLE PARENT? YOU STILL GET ALLIES. NAME TWO:

ALLY ONE: _____

ALLY TWO: _____

WHAT I WILL ASK THEM TO HOLD:



WHO TO CALL WHEN THE TELLS STACKUP

SOME KIDS HAVE ANXIETY, ATTENTION, LEARNING, OR MOOD CONDITIONS THAT SHOW UP AROUND SCREENS. THOSE NEED REAL CLINICAL CARE—NOT JUST A ROUTER UNPLUGGED.

PEDIATRICIAN: _____

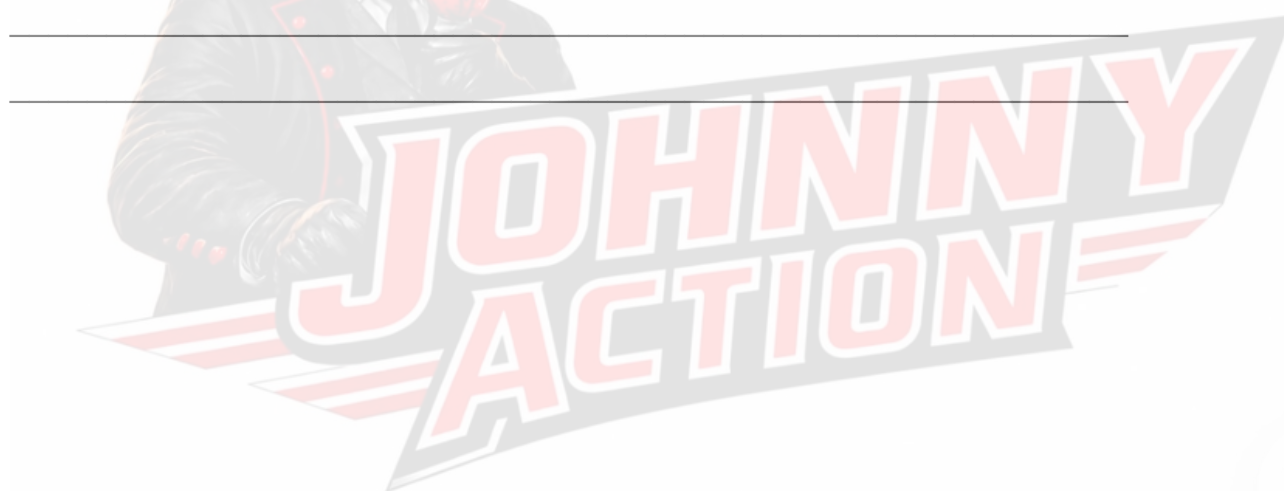
SCHOOL COUNSELOR: _____

TEACHER / DEAN: _____

FAMILY THERAPIST: _____

IF THERE IS TALK OF SELF-HARM, TOTAL WITHDRAWAL, OR VIOLENCE — YOU DO NOT WHITE-KNUCKLE THAT. YOU GET LOCAL PROFESSIONAL HELP NOW.

IN THE UNITED STATES, CALL OR TEXT 988 — THE SUICIDE AND CRISIS LIFELINE. IF SOMEONE IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER, CALL 911. WHAT I WILL SAY WHEN I CALL:





THE HONEST PAGE

NOT EVERY SCREEN HOUR IS ABUSE. NOT EVERY GAMER IS AN ADDICT. NOT EVERY QUIET KID ON A TABLET IS BROKEN. NOT EVERY BAD MOOD IS THE ALGORITHM'S FAULT.

HIGH CONFIDENCE: HEAVY, UNSTRUCTURED USE IN CHILDHOOD TRACKS WITH SLEEP LOSS, ATTENTION TROUBLE, MOOD TROUBLE, AND FAMILY CONFLICT — AND THE PLATFORMS ARE ENGINEERED FOR ENGAGEMENT.

HIGH CONFIDENCE: THE CURE STARTS AT HOME WITH RULES, REPLACEMENTS, AND ADULT EXAMPLE.

MEDIUM CONFIDENCE: ANY ONE-SIZE NUMBER — ONE HOUR, NO SCREENS BEFORE FIFTEEN, BAN EVERYTHING. FAMILIES DIFFER. THE PRINCIPLE DOES NOT: THE ADULTS SET THE TERMS OF THE TOOL.

WHAT WOULD PROVE THE PANIC WRONG IN YOUR HOUSE: A CHILD WHO SLEEPS, WHO CAN STOP, WHO HAS A LIFE OFFSCREEN, WHOSE GRADES AND FRIENDSHIPS HOLD. THEN YOU ARE IN MANAGEMENT MODE — KEEP THE RULES ANYWAY.

WHERE MY HOUSE ACTUALLY IS RIGHT NOW:



MARCHING ORDERS

☐ CHARGING STATION IS OUTSIDE THE BEDROOMS — STARTING TONIGHT.

☐ DINNER RULE WITH NO PHONES — STARTING TONIGHT.

☐ ONE REPLACEMENT ACTIVITY ON THE CALENDAR WITH A DAY AND A TIME.

☐ HOUSE STANDARD WRITTEN ON PAPER AND POSTED WHERE EVERYBODY EATS.

☐ TWO-WEEK LOG STARTED.

☐ IF THE TELLS ARE STACKING — CALL THE PEDIATRICIAN THIS WEEK.

☐ RECRUIT ONE OTHER FAMILY. AGREE ON THE SAME DOCK TIME.

THE FAMILY I RECRUITED: _____

SIGNED X _____ DATE _____

NAME THE CURSE. APPLY THE CURE. DO NOT HAND YOUR CHILD TO A FEED AND CALL IT NORMAL.

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I AM JOHNNY ACTION. AND WE FIGHT BACK.