

ALIA: So Bob, recently I've been wondering about how technology affects my ability to focus. Like I know it does, but I, I don't really feel like I have a really clear understanding of how much it affects my focus. So I decided to do an experiment. I was trying to get through this big project at work one day and I decided to set up a microphone at my desk without warning any of my colleagues, including Kelly, and I recorded myself working to capture every single distraction or interruption. And after getting consent from my coworkers to use this audio, I wanna show you what happened, Bob. I was interrupted a lot, like probably a hundred times in an hour, maybe more, from all kinds of things.

A: Notifications. Mm, text message.

A: Coworkers.

[Background audio of coworkers singing, joking, chatting, laughing]

A: Myself, Bob. I interrupted myself!

A: Did you hear that, Kelly and Reyes? I interrupted myself to talk about TV. So I am my own interruption.

A: And I realized I'm constantly being interrupted. So Bob, has technology shortened my attention span slash completely ruined my ability to focus?

BOB: I have this image of when I used to volunteer with youth basketball and I had one basketball in a gym and there were 20 kids surrounding me, all of them trying to grab the basketball screaming at me, and I was trying to get them to line up in some kind of order. I bet lots of people have, have been in a room full of kids demanding something simultaneously and your brain just wants to explode and like you just want to yell shut up everybody!! And that's exactly how we feel about technology right now. Instead of having you know one or two ways to interrupt us, a phone call or a person walking up and tapping you on the shoulder. Now there are dozens of these technologies that can virtually tap you on the shoulder at all times. Emails, Slack, texts, Facebook messages, Instagram messages, all these other announcements, notifications, bleeps, blops that are constantly picking away at you. It's like you're being attacked. It's like you're in a video game, and the enemy fire is coming from all directions and you just can't focus on anything because you're overwhelmed by all these pathways into your brain.

A: Yes, I do feel that Bob. I feel like I'm constantly being attacked by all of the different things that want my attention, whether it be my phone, my watch that's connected to my phone, people, coworkers, friends, digitally or IRL, so many things. Also, just like all the other stuff that's not even technology related that is on top of that, like sounds, I'm really distracted by sounds. I'm really distracted by conversations that I overhear that have nothing to do with me. I am distracted by music. I'm distracted by so many things. So I guess I'm just wondering like, yeah, on top of all of that already not-tech stuff, how is tech affecting my ability to focus?

B: We are programmed to notice changes in our environment because the change might be a lion coming to eat us. We don't notice what's not changing around us. So being alert to change is, is for self defense. So that's a good thing. But decades later, billions of dollars later companies have figured out exactly what color to make something blink or what sound to produce to make you turn your head to look at the lion. That's the problem. So technology has taken a tendency that we all already have and taken full advantage of it.

A: I like to think that my technology is working for me, but it seems like tech might actually just be running my life.

A: I'm Alia Tavakolian.

B: And I'm Bob Sullivan.

A: And this is "So, Bob," the show that tackles questions about the unintended consequences of technology. The sometimes creepy, usually confusing digital stuff that makes you stop and go, wait, am I just technologically illiterate? Is tech running me? Am I crazy for wondering about this? We're here to tell you--you're not crazy for wondering about this stuff. We've got a lot of questions.

B: And we're going to find some answers.

A: Let's dive in.

[AD BREAK]

A: Okay, back to my question. So Bob, what do you think, is this the end of attention? Like has modern tech robbed us of our ability to focus completely?

B: Let's step back from the question a bit because I think the first thing we have to deal with is this a good or a bad thing that everybody is multitasking all the time now. Uh, there is a school of thought that lots of folks are capable of holding a conversation while looking at a cell phone while listening to music while kind of having one eye on a game on a TV. I mean, this is the state of modern life right now. If you go into any bar or library coffee shop, you're going to see this is how people behave. So there's an argument that we are changing as people and we're good at this. I think that argument is a lot of bunk.

A: You don't think people are good at multitasking?

B: I think people wildly overestimate their ability to multitask. And I think if you've ever talked to someone with ear buds in at the bus stop, you know that the conversation changes the second somebody finally pulls the bud out of their ear. And that's when you know you're actually communicating, right? And before then, I think we, we implicitly know this. If you said something important before the earbud came out of the ear, you know you're going to have to repeat it right? And so as a result, you know, I'm, I'm pretty certain that with some very rare exceptions, I mean I think you know one of the things I think about are moms taking care of three kids at once obviously can multitask or else their kids wouldn't make it through the day alive. Right? So there

are these amazing exceptions to the rule, but for the most part we can only do one thing at a time if we want to do it well. And our world right now is aimed at preventing us from doing one thing at a time.

A: I think I thought and somehow I think I might still think I'm a really good multitasker cause like I do it all day long. Like, like I'm, I constantly have a couple of different things going. I have a list of to do's and I'm like checking them off. I might be listening to a show that we're making and thinking about how I feel about it and also uh writing an email. But I'm thinking back on my experiment and like that can't be true. Like I can't actually be a good multitasker because like look at how many times I get stopped. Even by myself. Do you multitask, Kelly?

K: I don't like to multitask. I think sometimes I try because I think I can do it. And then I'm like, no, I literally, I can't, I cannot talk to you while looking at my phone. I have to finish this text message and then I can talk to you because I am very, very easily distracted and I've always been that way. Every time I do it, I know I'm not doing the, as good of a job. Like sometimes I've tried to listen to a version of like a trailer or something we made while also looking at my email and then I evidently have to stop doing one of the tasks while I'm trying to do both of them. Like, I'm like, oh, I can't, I cannot focus on both of these.

A: Okay. But hold on, I want to challenge this.

K: Okay.

A: Because I know a little bit about you. Do you not have Gilmore Girls or something of the like, on in the background pretty regularly in your life?

K: <<sighs>> Okay. Yes.

B: <<laughs>>

K: So...

A: 'Cause I do that

K: Yeah.

A: Like I have, like I was thinking, I was like, I don't multitask that often. But then last night I'm on Instagram. I have Gilmore Girls on the TV, and I'm on Instagram, and I'm filling up Ethel, my dog's water bowl.

K: Oh my God, you are so right.

A: Like who am I?

K: I didn't think about that as multitasking. I think of that. But you're so right. I, oh my gosh. Sometimes, it's like an addiction. We know tech is an addiction. Um addicted to having something on, the stimulus. It's like, I need this on because I can't sit in my apartment alone with

no sound and uh, like what, what I'm going to make dinner and not listen to anything while I'm doing it?

A: Yeah. So Bob, do you really mean to tell me you never multitask? Like you're never walking Rusty and listening to something?

B: Do you think that every doctor eats healthy all the time?

<<laughter>>

A: Is that your excuse?

B: Do what I say not what I do. I'm, the reason I'm interested in this is because I suffer from all this just the same. Even the most intense moments. Alia, I'm going to confess something to you now that I shouldn't. I'm sitting across from you in a studio and we're working on scripts together, and we're going back and forth. But I can tell I have new emails from somewhere because it's in my computer screen and I spend so much of my energy resisting the urge to click on the inbox tab while I'm having this intense experience talking to you about things. And sometimes I fail and I look at my email.

A: I kind of wonder if it's tied to like FOMO in some way, cause I think I feel like my multitasking is motivated by this feeling I have of like not wanting to be behind, not just in my work life, like just in my life life, like not wanting to miss my friends' Instagrams like not wanting to miss stuff from their lives, not wanting to miss a piece of news that's really important and not wanting to miss a tweet that I find really funny from somebody I really enjoy. Like I just like don't want to miss things and I feel like if I don't constantly check my phone--

B: You'll miss them. There's probably a name for this meme that I'm not clever enough to know, but you know, you know the guy with his arm around one girl who's looking behind them to check out another girl. That's technology, right? Like your arm is around your text messages while you're looking at your email over your shoulder,

A: It's real. It's true. Oh, like well I guess what I'm wondering is like, is it a problem?

K: So there's a point that, our addiction to technology, is also linked to anxiety. And how, you know, Bob, you mentioned the survival instinct part where it's like, oh, I got to get this message, got to get this message. And then it's like you tense up, and you have to look at it and how it heightens our anxiety a lot. And I just think that's very interesting. So if we link it in that way, then it sounds bad, right?

B: Oh, absolutely. And, and tech is an addiction and this is exactly the kind of intermittent gratification that makes people crazy. You know, like the, the occasional potential threat. I mean first of all, every email is a threat, right? And I know I'm, I'm my mom's son, which means every time the phone rings, I assume someone has died. And you know that times a thousand is how, you know, I live in my email. I think most people have at least some of that, right? The, the email is probably a boss who's demanding something or it's a note of a mistake you made or something you're going to have to deal with. I mean, it's not irrational that if you miss an email,

something really important and bad might happen to you. But I have this other expression for this to broaden the idea out just a little bit. I call it having a comma in my soul. So if you've ever been in the middle of a conversation, and you, you lose your train of thought and you can't quite get it back and it's something you, you want to just like say something really important to someone, and you can't remember it and just walk around for the next couple of hours with what I call a comma in your soul. It frustrates our brains.

A: Yeah

B: People like to complete tasks. There's nothing more satisfying that gets you a rush of chemicals that make you feel good than starting a plan, working through something and completing it. Finishing things is such a good feeling...

A: Mm.

B: ...and we have this incredible drive and urge to finish. It's very satisfying. But again, technology is just interrupting all of our tasks, almost preventing us from completing these things while at the same time constantly scratching that itch and putting what I think of as millions and millions of little commas in our souls so that we just live this crazed life of frustration. I never quite finished anything and I think that's, that's more than anything that's what technology is robbing us from.

A: I have a hunch I am actually kind of afraid of like what would happen if I slowed down and just tried to focus on one thing. Ironically it's what my therapist tells me to do when I'm having like a panic attack, right, is to slow down and to count five things in the room. And I find that to be very difficult for me to do. Very difficult, uh, panic attack or not panic attack. That's like a difficult thing for me to do just to calm down, just to sit in stillness and silence and focus. But yet I'm seeing this trend where so many people seem to crave focus and crave like this silence or mindfulness or whatever you want to call it. It's like all over everything. It's all over the Internet. My friends are talking about it. It's a thing that people are sort of like chasing, and and I wonder like what is that about that those things seem so at odds to me.

K: Why is it so hard? Like, why is it so hard to do?

A: Yeah,

B: Yeah. Oh and yoga, the rise of yoga is absolutely, at least in part because of, of people, people know they're missing out on something. To contradict the whole premise of this podcast, which I will do on an annoyingly regular basis. What you're describing now this quest to sit in silence and in peace has existed since the beginning of humanity, right? This is what the monks were searching for. This is probably one of the ways that religion was invented. The core of that is being able to sit still. Humans are not very good at this. We've never been very good at this. So as, as I'll often say, tech hasn't created this brand new problem out of nowhere. But I do think tech has made this much, much worse

A: I mean, so it seems like there's this intensely human desire for stillness and mindfulness. And yet there are literal armies of people trying to stop you from getting that because they want to make money but also throw this wrench in I enjoy the shit that the armies throw at me. Like the weapons they're firing. I'm like cool. Pretty, pretty rainbow.

K: Yeah.

A: So what am I supposed to do with all this?

B: If you were a religiously inclined person, you might hear in the story that you just told, Alia, a pretty good description of the battle between good and evil.

A: So I grew up in the evangelical church for a long time. Um like most of my middle school and high school years were in the Evangelical Church, and they always talked about how the enemy, Satan, the devil, whatever, wasn't ever going to be like obviously evil. Like the enemy was always going to be like in the appearance of like something that was desirable or exciting to you. So you should always be on the lookout and like, I sort of hate myself right now for comparing these two things. But like that does feel like what this is, right? Like the enemy of mindfulness is probably partially tech. These big tech companies that create these things that are really fun to look at but also suck up a shit ton of my time and attention. I don't know what to make of that. I don't know what to make of all of this. Like I feel like I'm sort of tangled in a web right now and I'm not sure like how to get out.

A: Bob, please tell me you have someone who can shed some light on all of this.

BOB: In this case I definitely do, and I'll tell you all about her right after the break.

[AD BREAK]

B: I have the perfect person to talk about all of this to talk about attention and how we reclaim ourselves in this crazy world. Annie Murphy Paul.

ANNIE: I'm Annie Murphy Paul. I'm a magazine journalist and book author.

A: Okay, so that's a huuuge understatement. Annie Murphy Paul is THE person to talk to about biological and social sciences. She's a former senior editor at Psychology Today magazine and has written two books on social sciences.

B: I've known Annie for about a decade, and when we first met, this topic came up immediately, and we've been talking about it ever since. The idea that attention is precious and right now people are losing it and all of these things are attacking it, but Annie has lots of ideas about how to get it back.

ANNIE: I think it's important to understand that evolution designed us to be attentive to our environment. And so the way attention works is that we're always pulling back from and focusing back on what on the task in front of us, even when it feels like we're continuously

focusing on one thing. It's just that when we pull back now and scan our environment for important things to check out, there's so much more there waiting to pounce. In other words, it's not a, it's not a saber tooth tiger, it's a facebook update or a new tweet.

A: I just want to say digital sabre tooth tigers.

B: <<laughs>>

A: Like, yeah, Annie Murphy Paul. That's exactly right. Like that's exactly what those fucking notifications feel like.

A: Bob, doesn't this just make you feel less like a dummy that just like follows whatever directions the technology points you. But instead you're like, this is so intrinsically human. Like of course, this is how technology affects us, right?

B: This is you being hacked. They've figured out exactly what your most primal motivations are and they are poking away at them and you are psychologically almost incapable of ignoring that.

ANNIE: Yeah although of course with many of our digital past times, it's more a little shot of dopamine, of, of pleasure that we get and that's in some ways just as disruptive to our attention as a threat would be because uh, it's called intermittent reinforcement. We never know when that little pulse of pleasure is going to arrive. And so we keep checking. We're like a rat in a, in a cage who keeps pressing and pressing and pressing the lever and once in a while we get a pellet. It is almost a physical compulsion to keep checking, keep looking, because we've learned that every once in a while there's going to be a reward.

A: So I'm like the rat in the cage that's hitting, like checking Instagram constantly for new stuff in hopes of some positive reinforcement that may or may not show up

B: There's years of study that show this kind of intermittent reinforcement is actually more powerful than constant reinforcement. And I think more to our point here makes you more crazy, makes you more compulsive. And I think the beginnings of, of change here is to realize when I need my phone, I need to reach in my pocket and look at it. And when that compulsion attacks, that's when you've crossed some line that you better figure out how to back away from.

K: Yeah, I just love that she talks about it's about whether or not we're going to get the notification. it's not even about like the notification itself. It's like whether or not we're actually gonna get it. So that's why we keep checking. So that's when you say I interrupted myself or when you like I would, we were doing a listen yesterday and I kept turning over my phone even though no one's messaging me. I just kept turning it over. I was like, why? It was like 4:19. Okay. I put it back on the table and then it's like I turn it back over and it's 4:22. And I'm like, why? Why am I, why do I keep doing that? There's no messages. I haven't had messages for three hours.

A: So it's like is it so is it, it's the notification that gives us the dopamine, not the actual content of the notification?

K: I think so.

ANNIE: Looking at several streams of information or entertainment while students are studying is, seems almost universal. My own children's elementary school classes do it and I know that the students, the college students that I've taught do it and they all think they can do it well, and that's the rub because we don't have a very good sense of our own proficiency at uh paying attention and we may not be aware, but it is the case that when we're trying to pay attention to many things at once, we work more slowly, we, we make more errors and we don't perform at the same level that we would if we were paying attention to just one thing. So I think in terms of what teachers and parents and others who are concerned about kids should be thinking about it's, it's instilling in them the habit of mono tasking of just doing one thing at a time.

A: I feel like Annie's totally describing me as she's talking about like people who think they're really proficient at multitasking, but they're just not because they don't understand, they don't have a really good sense of their own proficiency at paying attention. And like, I think I'm really good at paying attention. Why am I uneasy about it? Are you uneasy about it Bob? Like do you try to monotask?

B: I feel my ability to do that slipping away. I feel like that was probably my best, one of my better skills, my ability to focus and a little piece of my soul dies inside as I struggle with this.

A: Okay. So I want to know Bob and Kelly, like is there a thing that you do regularly that you feel like, like forces you to monotask? Like, is there anything in your life that you're like, I I do this thing and I really can't do anything but that thing? I think mine is therapy once a week. There's literally nothing else I can do except talk to talk to my therapist.

K: I was about to say I think therapy's one of the only times cause I'd be like, well when I drive I don't ever really look at my phone. But then I'm like, no, I have to play music while I'm driving. And that counts.

ALIA: Okay, so Bob. Where do YOU monotask every week?

B: Playing music? Yeah, I play music in Irish pubs. I play drums and guitar and sing sometimes. It's those moments where I feel like I'm living completely in the moment, I'm totally immersed in what I'm doing, terrified to make a mistake in front of people, um but also just physically and mentally enjoying what I'm doing. Uh, at the same time, I also am a photographer, and I feel the same way about that. Taking a photograph, it requires this complete mixture of your artistic side and your technical side.

ALIA: You know, I'm thinking back to my distraction experiment from the top of the episode and I find myself wondering, what solutions Annie might have?

ANNIE: Your experiment makes me think of what a friend of mine told me that she does. She's one of these people who actually walks the walk of, of using her tech in very intentional and conscious ways. And she is a curator at a museum and uh very busy like the rest of us. And gets tons of emails like the rest of us, but she only checks her email twice a day in the morning and, and in the uh afternoon. And she tells me that she often finds shit when she checks in the afternoon, she'll find a string of messages and whatever someone was asking her about at noon has been resolved by 2:00 and she didn't have to be a part of it.

A: When I heard this part of the interview, I looked over at my to do list and literally on my to do list for the last two months has been block out time so only check email twice a day.

A: And I haven't done it at all. Just haven't done it, you guys. Uh, yeah, that sounds really liberating. I felt so like indicted when I heard that from Annie Murphy Paul like, yeah, that's so, that makes so much sense.

ANNIE: Sherry Turkle is a scholar at MIT who's looked for many years at the effects of technology on human relationships. And if I'm correct in, in thinking about her career, she started out as many did as a kind of techno enthusiast and not that she didn't always have qualms or concerns, but lately her work has really looked at the dark side and the downside for human relationships of this irony of constant connectedness that leads to impoverished actual connection. And I, I know what you mean. I've experienced what you're talking about and it's, it's, um, I think a matter in part of norms and, and I don't know how much success we'll have in instituting norms that say, um, you know, it's really not polite. It's really not acceptable to be looking at your phone when, when there's someone right in front of you who's talking to you.

A: It's what Bob said about the dude on the bus with the earbuds, trying to have a conversation. It's, it's my cofounder who wears ear buds all the time cause he's listening stuff. And I started talking to him cause I don't realize he has them in, and then I realize we're not actually having a conversation. It's not just about like our inability to be attentive to all the tasks at hand, right. But it's like, it affects our human interactions.

ANNIE: One thing that we get away from in the use of technology is the body. We become this disembodied head that you know, is just uh looking at a screen. And so I find that when I talk to someone that I'm close to or, even when I interview someone I try to be in my own body and aware of the feelings and the sensations that are coming up in me as I talk to that other person and I try to assume a state of being both calm and alert and being open to whatever I'm feeling from the other person. And that's the basis of, of empathy, um, when you are using your own body as an instrument to understand the other person.

B: I teared up when she said that. This idea that listening to someone, listening to them, not just with your ears but with your whole physical presence is such a beautiful thing. And as she said it, I also went through this quick inventory of the recent times when I felt that and the recent times when I haven't and it was a pretty stark thought.

A: I just think about like the power of eye contact. Like, even just like being able to look at Kelly across this booth right now and like make a connection, and like I feel so heard right now cause she's like looking at me, and she's smiling and like nodding, and like I just feel, I feel this like warm fuzzy human connection or being able to like turn out into the booth and look at Carson who works on our show and like, like she'll, Carson is so good about this, she like validates with her body.

B: Mhmm mhmm

A: And so like I'll say something, and I'm thinking in my brain because I constantly doubt myself. I'm thinking, I don't know if was that like a dumb thing. And I look at Carson, Carson is like nodding and I know that it's, it's totally genuine and that like I feel like I get less and less of that, and I give less and less of that because of how technology runs my life.

K: The importance of active listening is like one of the best tools I've ever learned. Cause it's like I know how I feel when I you know was talking to someone I really respected and looked up to, and they were just looking at their computer. Even though I knew that they were there in the room, they weren't really there. And it's subconscious that, that what they're doing, they weren't being malicious, but it is, it's that feeling of, oh, okay, I guess I shouldn't bother you. You know, it's, it sucks.

A: Yeah, yeah.

K: It sucks

B: You feel so small when, when someone is typing while you're talking to them. This happens in newsrooms all the time. Everyone thinks they're super busy. And so a few years ago I tried this experiment where even if it was my boss, if he was typing while I was talking, I just stopped and stood there until he looked at me. And the reactions that you get are insane. Like he looked at me like I was killing someone. Like what?

A: <<laughs>>

B: I'm like, I'm just waiting. You can finish your thought please. You know? Uh, yeah. I mean try it sometime it's, it's...

A: Ugh.

B: It's awkward but it's an interesting experiment.

A: So I guess I'm wondering like what are some solutions for this? Like, like what can we walk away with that makes us feel, cause I'm feeling sort of like burdened by this right now. Like physically my body feels like, I feel heavy. And so I guess I'm wondering like what can we do, what can we do to feel a little bit lighter?

ANNIE: The idea is to have an expanding length of time between tech breaks. So it might be 15 minutes at the start and then half an hour and then 45 minutes. And, uh, the idea behind it is

first of all, to break the habit of checking every 30 seconds or every minute and sort of lengthen that amount of time that kids are able to go without checking or even thinking of checking.

ALIA: Annie is talking about tech breaks. Like, putting your phone away for 15 minutes at a time, then checking it for like a minute, and then putting it away. Wash. Rinse. Repeat.

BOB: So reading a book might actually distract you enough, you don't need social media anymore for at least a little while.

ANNIE: Yes, and the fact that paper books have no notifications and no dings and beeps or anything, it's actually makes it a superior form of equipment. And I think that that was something humans got right a long time ago.

A: So taking tech breaks, taking tech breaks to break our habits. Kelly, do you want to make a pact with me to try to take some tech breaks in the next few weeks?

K: I will make the pact with you. Bob, are you going to make our pact?

B: I love this idea. In fact, I, you know our phones have this do not disturb feature. I want someone to invent a clock for it.

A: Ooh.

B: So we can set it to 15 minute intervals. Really useful idea. I love this idea.

A: Okay, so hands in, uh on three, we're going to say tech break, but first how many tech breaks? What are we agreeing to here? Like can we just be like reasonable, like one a day.

K: Like for how long though?

A: That's a great question.

K: It's the time. That's what it is. It's the time between your tech breaks

A: 30 minutes. That feels so reasonable.

A: Okay. Bob, uh Kelly, are we committed to this?

K: I'm committed.

A: Hands in like we're a hockey team. One, two, three tech breaks.

B: Tech breaks!

ALIA: Will you listener join us in our tech break pact? Put on do not disturb. Don't peek for 30 minutes at a time. And then try an hour. See what happens. We'd love to hear about it if you do. The irony is not lost on us that if you do tell us about it, it will likely be with some kind of technological device, but we'd love to hear how it goes. So, tag us on Twitter with your #TechBreakMoment.

A: Okay. So like let's circle back to our initial question, you guys. What do we think now? Is our ability to focus just completely ruined by technology?

K: I think that like a lot of things in this show, we just need to deprogram ourselves again. Tech has changed the way we think. And we forget that it's done that. So now it's like, okay, wait, let's step back and reprogram, take the tech break, and realize that doing that break is to help you and then you start to get rid of that habit slowly.

A: Yeah. It's like, it's like we have to realize we're being hacked by these armies of people at tech companies creating these digital sabre tooth tigers to come at us from every direction, all the time through our phones and our other devices. But like we can acknowledge that, we can know that that is happening, and we can take some control. We can. Bob, what do you think?

B: I'm both scared and optimistic. I'm really optimistic because now I feel like this conversation is not unusual, right? Like you probably have had some of these conversations already with your friends and family so people are talking about it and I completely agree with what you said about deprogramming Kelly. I think we also just need some, some good social conventions around this. So if you just said, I'm sorry, can I just focus on this email for a moment and then I'll get back to the conversation or could we pause the movie for a second while I respond to this? Just little conventions like that I think would make a big difference.

K: So you've got to do it.

A: So you have to you have to do it

K: To, to survive.

A: I'm going to try, you know what? Like this week. I'm just going to try to take some time to be more intentional about like looking my coworkers and my friends and my partner in the eye. Just like giving them that dignity, like looking them in the eye and hearing them and listening with my whole body. I really love that. I want to just take the time to be a little more present in my own body. I think we can do that. I think that's a manageable, reasonable hope.

[AD BREAK]

ALIA : Next week, Bob answers one of YOUR questions. Three words: Google. Location. Tracking. You don't wanna miss it. If you have questions about your digital life or an unintended consequence of technology you use every single day, write to us at Sobob@spokemedia.io or DM us on Twitter or Instagram @sobobpod. We'd love to answer any question you throw at us. So Bob is a Spoke Media production. It's hosted by me, Alia Tavakolian and Bob Sullivan. We're produced by Kelly Kolff with help from Reyes Mendoza and Carson McCain. This episode was mixed by Alexander Mark. Our head of post production is Will Short. The songs you hear in this episode come from FirstCom. Our executive producer is Keith Reynolds. Thanks to this week's

guest, Annie Murphy Paul, what a treasure. You can find her on twitter [@anniemurphypaul](https://twitter.com/anniemurphypaul).
Thanks for listening!