

hometown. Based on the background of accelerated forces and his trip down memory lane, he provides a recommended 18-point platform for a hypothetical political party closely aligned with Mother Nature. Each point could justify its own chapter, but each has limited analysis on the pros and cons.

In conclusion, *Thank You for Being Late* is an informative up-to-date read about the state of information technology and the historical background to the globalization of markets, especially in the first half of the book. However, its editorial nature and lack of a bibliography and research notes would not make it a primary resource for research. For me, it bogged down in the latter portion.

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**THE TECH-WISE FAMILY: Everyday Steps for Putting Technology in Its Proper Place** by Andy Crouch. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2017. 224 pages. Hardcover; \$13.99. ISBN: 9780801018664.

When I first heard that Andy Crouch had a new book about living wisely with technology, I knew I had to get a copy. I have read several of Crouch's previous books including *Culture Making*, *Playing God*, and *Strong and Weak* and greatly appreciate his insights and friendly writing style (he is also an engaging speaker). His latest book does not disappoint and applies his wise and winsome style to the perplexing issue of "putting technology in its proper place."

The book opens with a delightful forward by Crouch's 16-year-old daughter. In it she writes articulately and thoughtfully, indicating that the lessons her parents taught have been taken to heart. In the following section Crouch states "[t]his book is about how to find the proper place for technology in our family lives—and how to keep it there" (p. 16). The book is sprinkled throughout with results from surveys of parents with children ages 14–17 years, carried out by the Barna Group. These survey results reveal the extent to which technology has impacted home life and how parents have been wrestling with the resulting challenges. One such survey reveals that most parents believe technology and social media make it "more difficult to raise kids today" (p. 27).

Crouch begins by laying the ground work for establishing the need for "nudges" (pp. 33–35) and "disciplines" (pp. 35–37) to help keep technology in its "proper place." Crouch then introduces "Ten Tech-wise Commitments" which include items such as to "create more than we consume," to remember the "rhythm of work and rest," to avoid screens

before double digit ages, to "learn to sing together," and to "show up in person for the big events of life" (pp. 41–42). These commitments form the structure for the rest of the chapters of the book. The last chapter deals with the commitment of "being there" in which Crouch shares his own profound experience—sitting bedside with a dying friend.

All these commitments are indeed wise, but I admit to being surprised by the commitment to "learn to sing together." Crouch is a musician and comes from a musical family, so perhaps this suggestion reflects his own family and background. I suspect your mileage will vary with this particular commitment, depending on the musical abilities of your family. However, Crouch also ties this point to the issue of music in worship and makes some excellent points about the importance of congregational singing and what can be lost with amplified music and praise bands.

I must confess, at times his "ten commitments" made me uncomfortable, as they reminded me of the myriad ways I have fallen short in keeping technology "in its place" in my own life. However, each chapter ends with a Crouch family "Reality Check," wherein Crouch confesses frankly some of the ways his own family has struggled with these commitments and has fallen short. I found many of these "reality checks" to be refreshingly candid and helpful.

I have only small quibbles with a few sentences in the book. At one point Crouch suggests that "the problem isn't with our devices themselves—it's with the way we use them" (p. 148). Elsewhere he writes that "technology is at its best a neutral factor in what is most important in our families" (p. 66). Statements like these under-emphasize or miss the point that technology is not neutral and that technology is value laden. Media ecologists like Marshall McLuhan or Neil Postman have helped make the case that although we shape our tools, our tools always shape us. Indeed, many of the points that Crouch makes in the book are evidence that digital devices are not neutral and that we need to be aware of their built-in biases and nudges. In fact, near the beginning he writes, "The makers of technological devices have become absolute masters of the nudge" (p. 34).

At another point Crouch suggests that "technology emerges from the amazing success of modern science, and the hard work of scientists, but it's not like science at all. Science is hard. Technology is easy" (p. 51). While technology does utilize science, I would argue that science and engineering are distinct cultural activities. While I acknowledge that Crouch is talking here about how using technology

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is easy, the engineer in me is quick to add that the work of designing and developing technology is also difficult, just as science is.

As a computer teacher, I have been invited on a few occasions to speak to parents at schools about navigating a world of digital devices. The truth is, I have only limited practical guidance to offer, and as a parent I have had struggles with this in my own family as well. However, if I should be asked again to speak to parents on this topic, I will heartily recommend this book. Besides parents, this book is suitable for anyone who is seeking ways to “put technology in its place” in their own lives.

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**DISRUPTED: My Misadventure in the Start-Up Bubble** by Dan Lyons. New York: Hachette Books, 2016. 259 pages. Hardcover; \$27.00. ISBN: 9780316306089.

What do you do if you are a 52-year-old journalist who has been laid off because *Newsweek* is reducing its workforce? If you are Dan Lyons, you find out that there are few non-entry-level jobs in journalism and you end up in a tech start-up.

*Disrupted* chronicles Lyons’s uncomfortable journey through this transition. In the book, he describes his shifting emotions as he navigates the transition and turns his journalistic training toward observing the company (and industry) he has joined.

He finds a job at HubSpot, a start-up that is selling marketing software, primarily to small and mid-sized businesses. The company offers ways to get potential customers to contact the business, as opposed to cold contacts or unsolicited advertising.

HubSpot hires him as a high profile journalist/blogger, but once he arrives, the executives who hired him never actually meet with him. He is placed under a manager who is quite young and who has little experience in industry. In fact, the average age of employees is 26—half his age. The company hires many white, middle class workers straight out of college at low wages but with a promise of a fun place to work and a mission to make the world a better place. Lyons characterizes the culture of HubSpot, and many similar companies as (quoting former Zillow employee Rachel Kremer) “the culture of a frat house” (p. 55): free beer and candy, parties and costumes at work, and lots of effort to generate enthusiasm for the company. Lyons likens it to “a cult based around marketing” (p. 48).

It quickly becomes clear that there is a huge cultural divide. Lyons is old and feels ignored by his coworkers. His lack of fit in other ways exacerbates the age difference. He describes himself as a reporter: “Reporters are trained to hate corporate jargon and to eliminate it, not to engage in it. We’re expected to be cynical and skeptical, not to be cheerleaders” (p. 56). It does not take long for his cynical, snarky personality to confuse and then alienate him from pretty much everyone else at the company. (Readers who are not comfortable with periodic profanity may find parts of the book disconcerting.)

The book follows his series of misadventures, eventually leading him to leave the company for something more suitable. In the process, he highlights a number of issues that he regards as serious problems in both the company and the tech start-up world. He also has unflattering comments about his managers and coworkers (all but the two company founders are given pseudonyms—such as Cranium, Wingman, Trotsky, and Spinner).

The reader will need to decide whether some of the author’s difficulties are self-inflicted or if his coworkers are vindictive and hyper-sensitive. Of greater importance are issues such as the following (he does not limit these issues to HubSpot, but that is the source of his observations):

**AGEISM:** He takes exception on both moral and business grounds to the dramatic scarcity of workers over forty. Lyons gets into trouble by criticizing, via social media, the following public statement by one of the founders: “In the tech world, gray hair and experience are really overrated. We’re trying to build a culture specifically to attract and retain Gen Y’ers” (p. 146).

**A LACK OF DIVERSITY:** Besides one of the two founders, there are almost no employees who are not white. There are many women, but few of them in executive or board positions (p. 153).

**SILICON VALLEY <THE TECH WORLD>:** This is “a world where older employees are not wanted, where people get tossed aside when they turn forty. It’s a world where employers discriminate on the basis of race and gender, where founders sometimes turn out to be sociopathic monsters, where poorly trained (or completely untrained) managers abuse employees and fire people with impunity, and where workers have little recourse and no job security” (p. 115).

**THE START-UP BUSINESS MODEL:** Some of Lyons’s harshest criticism targets the business model of tech start-ups. HubSpot and many of its peer companies have never made a profit. This does not matter as long as they