

# XP

## Babel: Home XP

### Family Experience: Make It Personal

Most people think teenagers have technology issues. But if you took away an adult's cell phone, Facebook or Twitter accounts, texting or computer, many of us would find it hard to function. Technology is a part of all of our lives, not just a student's. And it's become such a big part, that many of us aren't even conscious of how much we check that phone or FB—even in a place you might least expect it.

#### THE HAPPIEST PLACE TO TEXT

By Brad Griffin

Recently I spent a day at Disneyland with my family, riding rides and battling crowds at the "Happiest place on earth." Despite my cynicism for over-commercialized places and my frustration about marketing to kids...we had a great day and my kids had a blast. But there was one thing that distracted me over and over throughout the day. It wasn't all the teenagers attached to their cell phones — I actually saw most of the teenagers engaged in real-life conversations with the people around them.

It was the parents.

I couldn't help but notice how many parents of kids of all ages were getting off rides and immediately checking their email and text inbox, ripping back responses as they floated behind their kids to the next attraction. Maybe they were bored out of their minds to be spending the day with their kids, but I doubt it. Maybe they were just distracted at that ONE time at the point I happened to see them (and I happened to catch about a hundred of them at just the right time). Or maybe they forgot what boundaries are and how to give their kids the gift of presence.

I get a lot of things wrong in parenting. But the more I saw this behavior, the more I was determined to completely ignore my phone (and it was my birthday!) to be present to my kids. I have to wonder, though: if this is what kids see at Disneyland from the adults around them (parents or otherwise), what are we as a culture showing them day after day in our "normal" lives?

I suspect that if we want them to put their phones down every now and then, we have to go first.

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