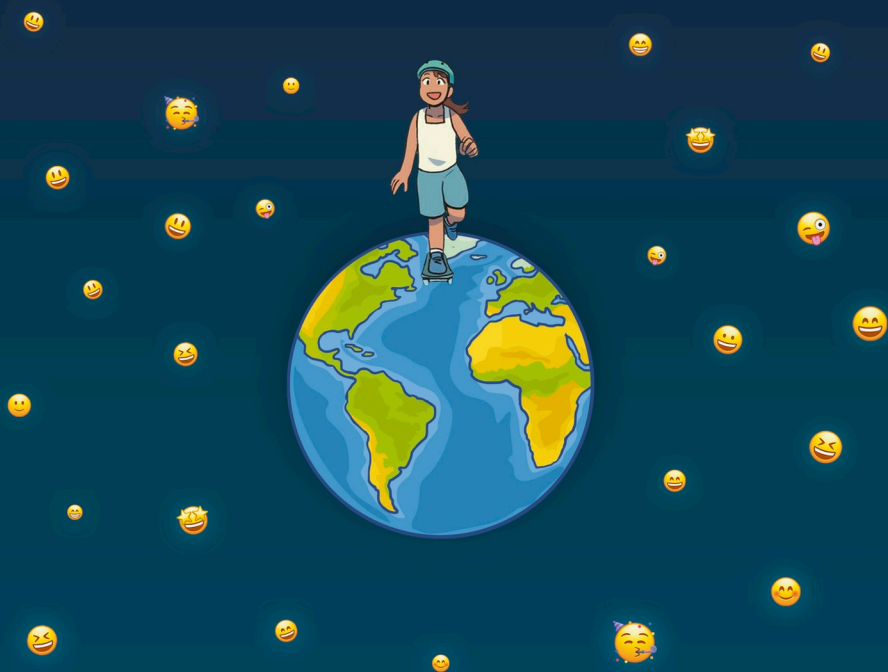




Your guide to fun and freedom
in a screen-filled world

The Amazing Generation



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Jonathan Haidt

author of
The Anxious Generation



Catherine Price

author of *How to Break
Up With Your Phone*



THE AMAZING GENERATION

*Your GUIDE to FUN
and FREEDOM in a
SCREEN-FILLED WORLD*



Written by
JONATHAN HAIDT
and **CATHERINE PRICE**

Illustrated by **CYNTHIA YUAN CHENG**

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To our children and their fellow
rebels — J.H. and C.P.

For the bright, creative, inspiring,
and amazing kids of the next gen-
eration and beyond! — C.Y.C.

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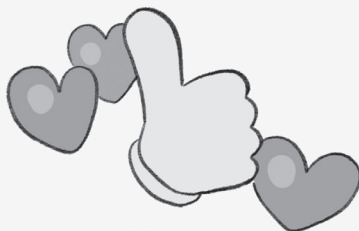
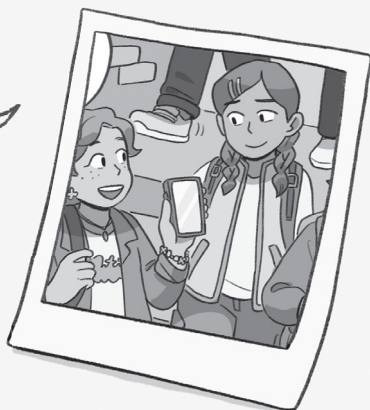
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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

THE TECH WIZARDS'
PICK-AND-THEIR LIES

SECRETS OF THE TECH WIZARDS

HOW TO BE A REBEL

CONCLUSION



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The Greedy Wizards and the Curse of the Stones

Once upon a time, a group of wizards created magical, glowing stones studded with glittering gems. They promised that these stones would bring **friendship, freedom, and fun** to anyone who picked one up. People rushed to grab them, and before long, anyone without a stone felt left out.

Some of the wizards tried to live up to their promises, but others became greedy. Instead of making life better, they tricked people into carrying their stones with them everywhere they went, and gazing into them all day long. Why? Because these greedy wizards had figured out how to turn human energy into gold.

The more time people spent looking at their stones, the richer the greedy wizards became—and the more **their promises began to seem like lies**.

Instead of finding friendship, people began to feel lonely. Instead of having fun, they felt anxious and sad. Instead of finding freedom, they felt controlled by their stones.

But then, **something amazing happened**: A few brave young people found the strength to look up. All around

them, they saw people standing motionless, trapped by their stones—and they decided to break free.

These young rebels began hanging out, going on adventures, and doing things they'd loved to do before they fell under the stones' spell. Every experience they had together made them feel more confident and connected. And the more fun they had, the stronger they became.

Other kids and teenagers heard the rebels' laughter and decided to join them. The greedy wizards, terrified their power might be slipping away, began to pack even more tricks into the stones. But for the first time ever, the wizards faced resistance.

Today, this rebellion is growing. On one side are the greedy wizards, desperate to keep stealing people's energy so that they can get richer. On the other side are the rebels: young people who have wised up to the wizards' tricks and who want to keep their energy for themselves. The winner of this struggle will determine what life is like not just for their generation, but for generations to come.

So which side will win?

The answer depends on you.



The Real-Life Rebellion

This isn't just a fairy tale. As you've probably figured out, the **glowing stones in the story are smartphones.**

The **glittering gems are apps, websites, and video games** that promise more friendship, freedom, and fun, but are actually designed to steal people's time and energy and turn them into money.

And **the wizards?** They're **the people in charge of the tech companies** that design and sell smartphones, apps, social media platforms, and games.

**Not all phones
are magical
stones—just
smartphones.**

Now, to be clear, *most* people who work at those companies are good people who make useful—often amazing—products. Many got into the business because they wanted to use technology to make life better. And in a lot of ways, technology *does* make life better.

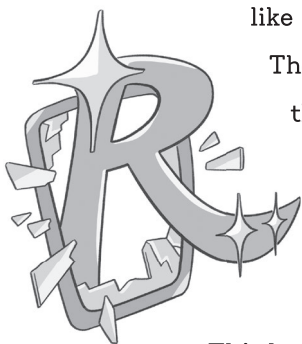
But along the way, some of the leaders of these companies began to care more about making money than anything else. They cared so much about making more money that they were willing to do things that could hurt people (including kids!) as long as *they* kept getting richer. These are the “greedy wizards.”

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Meet the Rebels

The **rebels are real, too**: They're an **amazing generation** of young people who know how to use technology in ways that help themselves, not greedy tech wizards. They choose to live in the real world as much as possible, and they think for themselves instead of mindlessly following the crowd.

It's easy to spot the rebels: They're not sitting around like zombies, scrolling and swiping.



They're out in the world, *doing* things—and as a result, their lives are full of *real* friendships, *real* freedom, and *real* fun.

Interested in joining the rebels?

This book is your guide.

THE REBELS' CODE

- Use **TECHNOLOGY** as a **TOOL**—**DON'T LET technology use YOU**
- **FILL your LIFE with REAL FRIENDSHIP, FREEDOM, and FUN**

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All Rebels Are Different

Some rebels love big groups of people, and some like being alone, or with a few close friends. Some are leaders who *start* movements and organizations and convince other people to join them. Others rebel through their *personal* decisions, like choosing to wait to get a smartphone or social media account, or by deciding to spend more time on real-life hobbies and less on screens. No two

rebels are the same. And anyone can be a rebel—including you.



You can still become a rebel if you already have a smartphone, tablet, social media account, or video game console. Keep reading to learn how.

I don't feel the need for a phone. I like being with people in the real world, face-to-face. —*Shiloh, 12*

I started to cut back on my social media use about six months ago. I'm reading and sleeping more. I'm thinking more independently. I have more time for me.
—*Bristol, 15*

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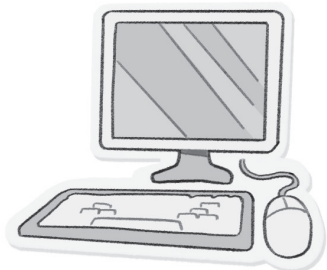
The generation just
above yours (born
between about 1996
and 2012) = **GEN Z**

Your generation (born
between about 2013 and
2025) = **GEN ALPHA**

There are also many people from the generation above yours who got smartphones and social media when they were around your age (or spent a ton of time

gaming), ended up regretting it, and decided to become rebels as young adults. These older rebels want to tell you what they wish they'd known at your age, so that **you can avoid their mistakes . . .**

I missed out on my entire teenagehood because of social media and my phone.
—*Kayleigh, 25*



I really wish I had gotten to know my grandfather better before he died, instead of always playing video games when he visited.
—*Benjamin, 21*

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... and how **joining the rebellion has made their lives better.**

I'm having more fun and doing more exciting things. I'm also better able to remember how I actually spent my time. —*Alyssa, 26*



All of the rebels want to share advice with you and your friends about how **you can become rebels too.**

I've rediscovered hobbies that truly fulfill me.
—*Sophia, 21*



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MEET a REBEL

SAMARA GORTON

18 years old, New York

First smartphone? When I was 11.

Ah-ha moment?

I went to a sleepaway camp that was phone free, and I loved it.

Inspiration / role models?

One of my friends *chose* to have a time limit on her phone. If she wanted more time, she had to call her dad to get the password. I thought that was smart—so I did it too.

Advice for your younger self?

I would never get TikTok. I hate Instagram and Snapchat. I wish they didn't exist. They're not cool.

What do you wish kids knew?

It might look like teens are entranced by their phones and social media, but a lot of them are not enjoying it and they wish they weren't on it.

What do you do with your free time?

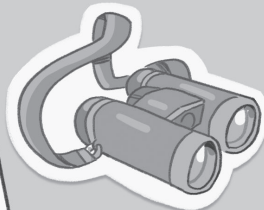
I love tennis. I love to run. I'm learning to play guitar. And I like film photography a lot. It encourages me to look for the beauty around me.

Advice for young rebels?

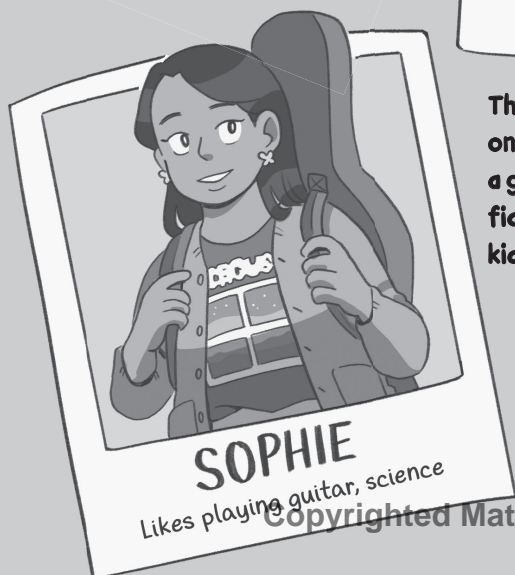
A lot of growing up is about self-discovery, and I just don't think you'll ever find yourself through your phone.

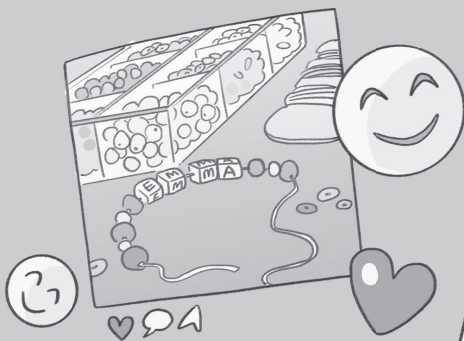
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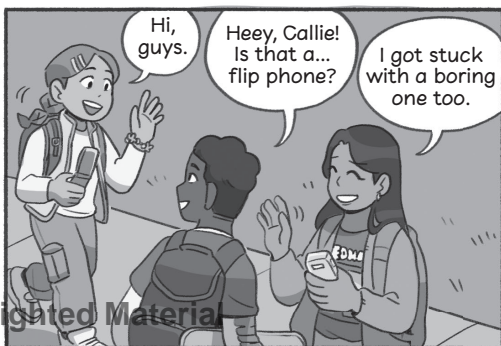


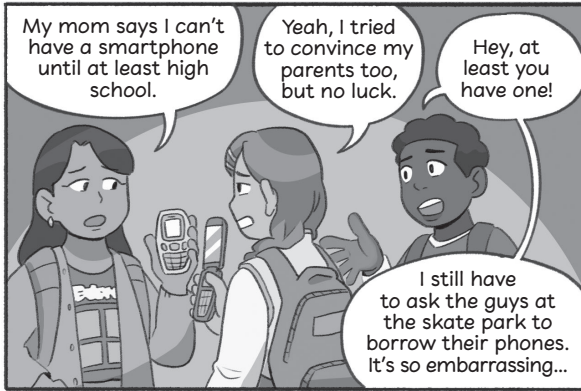
This book is two books in one: the main book, and a graphic novel, which is fictional but is based on real kids. Here's how it starts.



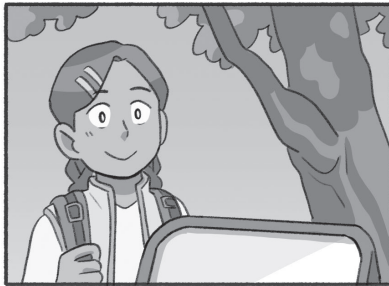
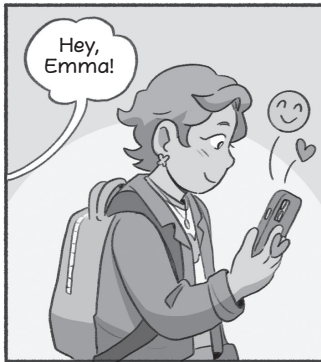


First day of school





~~~~~  
**SIGH...**



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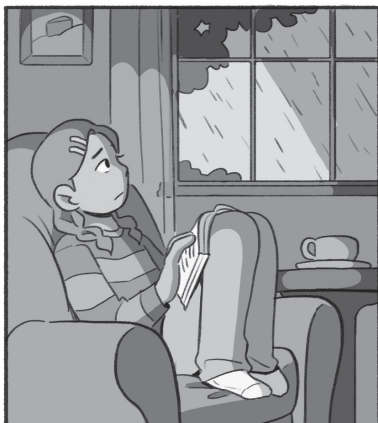
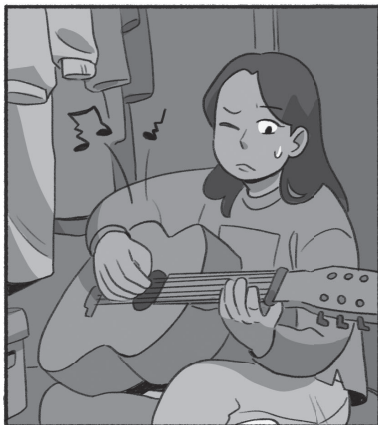
Over the weekend...

First live!  
Hi everyone!

•LIVE

815

alextheskater hiiii emma  
alextheskater spamming ur chat now  
alextheskater spamspamspamspam  
not\_david hahahaha  
matt.r2k my fave is the puppy filter :)  
give it a try!



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**alextheskater** grabbing bagels  
with @em4ever !



**not\_david** ○ ○ ○



**not\_david** 5 wins in a row.  
getting pretty good at this

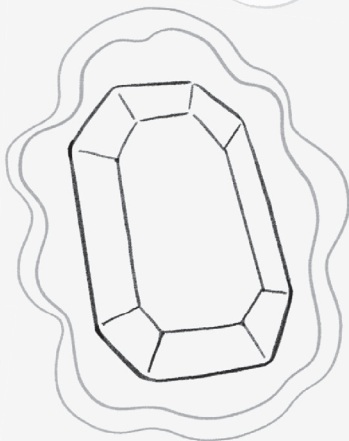


**alextheskater** 🙌 🙌  
**em4ever** nice work!

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I withdrew from my family and real-life friends, choosing to prioritize online friends over everything else. But the more I felt connected to someone across the country, the less I felt connected to the people right next to me. —*Mia, 19*



## PART ONE

# THE TECH WIZARDS' RISE- AND THEIR LIES



THE TECH WIZARDS'  
RISE-AND THEIR LIES

SECRETS OF THE TECH WIZARDS

HOW TO BE A REBEL

CONCLUSION

**Can you imagine leaving your house on your own, meeting up with friends, and roaming around your neighborhood for hours while your parents have no idea where you are?**

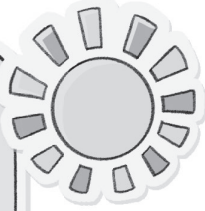
Believe it or not, this is how kids as young as seven and eight years old used to spend their free time. Many parents would actually send their kids out of the house, saying, “Just be home when the streetlights come on.”

Not only was this type of unsupervised and unstructured play really fun, but it was great for kids, even if they sometimes came home with scrapes and bruises. It helped them learn to solve problems, get along with other people, work as a team, and bounce back when things didn’t go their way. It also helped them build confidence and independence, because they got to test their limits and learn from their mistakes and failures.


On weekends and evenings, my brother and I would spend hours playing games in our rural Maryland backyard with our friends: hide-and-seek games with complicated rules, water balloon fights, and endless races. In the fall, we’d jump in leaf piles, and in the winter, we’d have snowball fights and make snowmen. When it was raining, we’d take our games inside. We had no phones and only three TV channels. —*Sophia, born 1986*



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When we were nine, my best friend and I built a shack in my backyard out of bits of lumber we took from a construction site, so that we could hide away from my parents and keep a stash of candy. It felt so great to have a clubhouse, which we built with our own hands. —*Jon, born 1963*



I grew up in New York City, and my friends and I would play on the swings or the monkey bars or play games in the street. Even when I was seven or eight years old, I used to bike to Central Park on my own and ride around the park or rent ice skates. Kids would go home when it got dark. I loved having freedom. —*Mary, born 1942*



### **TRY THIS!**

Ask your own parents or grandparents what they used to do in the afternoon when they came home from school, or on weekends, or summer vacation. What was the most fun?

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