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Just One More Scroll

Understand what keeps bringing you back—and choose what happens next



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Humalight

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Read at your own pace. Use the contents to return to a section or an exercise. Keep your notes wherever you find it convenient.

This free opening includes “Before you begin” and the complete first part. The full book continues with explanations, practical exercises, sources and further reading.

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Before you begin

You pick up your phone to answer someone. You reply, notice something else and follow it. When you look up, more of the evening has gone than you intended. Some of what you saw was interesting. You are less sure why you kept going.

This book concerns that familiar drift from a chosen visit into a session whose purpose you have lost. It asks what brings you back, what the visit provides and what you might change when the result no longer suits you.

We will follow Leah, who works from home and finds herself scrolling through the quiet after work, and Omar, whose online woodworking group is an important part of his life. Their different experiences help us examine a particular use of a screen without passing judgment on everything that happens through one.

The first half develops the explanation. The second offers six brief exercises for changing one recurring moment. You can try a different way to use the same service, prepare an alternative or decide how a visit will end. You do not need to abandon useful communication or replace every entertaining video with an improving activity.

These are educational suggestions, not treatment or a prescribed amount of screen time. The aim is to give your own purpose more influence over what happens next.

Part I — You only meant to check one thing

Dinner is ready

Leah is thirty-four and works as a customer-support coordinator. She helps a team handle difficult enquiries and organise the work that needs a response from another department. Since her role changed last year, she has worked mostly from her flat. Her colleagues are available through messages and calls, but she spends much of the day physically alone.

She values the arrangement in several ways. There is no crowded journey home, and she can use her lunch break for a few household tasks. By evening, though, she sometimes feels that work has ended without the rest of the day quite beginning.

On Wednesday at a quarter past six, she closes the work laptop and goes to the kitchen. She puts yesterday's stew in a pan to heat. Her sister Nadia has sent a message in the family chat about their mother's birthday. Leah wants to answer before she forgets.

When the food is hot, she turns off the hob, serves herself and sits at the small kitchen table. Before eating, she opens the chat. She confirms that she can bring dessert and smiles at a photograph Nadia has sent of her youngest child wearing a saucepan as a hat.

The exchange gives her something she wanted. She has helped with a family plan and enjoyed a glimpse of people she loves.

She moves from the chat to the app's feed. There is a short cooking video. Then a post from someone she used to work with, showing a new flat. Leah looks through the photographs. Another suggested post catches her eye, followed by a discussion whose first comment annoys her enough to read the replies.

When she notices the bowl in front of her, the stew has cooled. It is nearly seven. She had imagined eating, clearing up and perhaps reading. Now she feels oddly behind, although nobody was waiting for her to finish anything.

She puts the phone down and starts eating. A few mouthfuls later, she reaches for it again.

She cannot quite say what she expects to find this time.

The visit changed while you were in it

Leah did not open the app with the intention of postponing dinner. She had a reason to be there. Somewhere between replying to Nadia and reading an argument among strangers, the visit changed.

The change was made of small steps. Each next item offered a possible reason to stay: something useful, amusing, impressive or irritating. There was no single moment when she decided that the rest of the meal should wait.

You may recognise the sequence after a different beginning. You check the time of an event and end up reading other people's holiday posts. You send a work message, then seek

a little relief before returning to a difficult task. You open a feed after an awkward conversation and spend the next twenty minutes looking at people who seem to be having a better day.

Some of those minutes may be enjoyable. A video can make you laugh. A post can teach you something. A group can provide company. The question is whether the session, taken as a whole, is doing something you want at a cost you are willing to pay.

That question is easily lost when the only available verdict is “too much phone.” It makes every useful exchange part of the same offence and offers little explanation of why the next opening happens.

Leah has tried leaving the phone in another room. Sometimes it helps her settle into a book. Sometimes she fetches it almost immediately and feels worse for having failed at such a simple plan.

She knows how to put a device down. What she has not yet understood is what reaching for it is doing for her in that particular part of the day.

The answer may be modest. She wants amusement while eating. It may involve something harder to name: the change from being needed by colleagues all afternoon to sitting alone at the table. It may include more than one purpose, and the purpose may change during the visit.

Understanding that change gives the practical work somewhere to begin. Instead of treating the whole day as a failure of discipline, you can look at one opening, one expectation and what followed.

Continue with the book

You answer a message, notice something else and follow it. Later, the evening has gone further than you meant it to. This book examines what brings you back, what the visit provides and where the promise stops matching the result. Use short exercises to change one familiar opening, preserve useful online contact and prepare something worth returning to afterwards.

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