Background: We all have a love/hate relationship with our devices: we love them for the power and control they give us, but we are frustrated by the power and control they have over us. Constant connectivity actually decreases productivity.

Recommendations for email
- **Check your email less frequently.** A recent study found that checking email three times a day is more productive than constant checking. Send emails during regular working hours, avoiding weekend, evenings and holidays.
- **Off hour emails create an unspoken pressure.** Consider using a scheduled send so that you may both work when is convenient for you, but not pressure your colleagues. Use the ‘Send Later’ feature.
- **If you regularly catch up with email during non-traditional working hours,** use a disclaimer at the bottom of your email that you do not expect a reply until the next working day.
- **Respect others’ boundaries and capacity to respond.** Showing empathy for everyone’s working conditions goes a long way.

Recommendations for video calls
- **Avoid starting meetings by encouraging others to turn on their cameras.** It puts pressure on people who might only want or be able to participate by audio.
- **Remember phone calls?** Consider a voice-call only. Normalize this practice.
- **Avoid defaulting external calls to video,** especially if you don’t know each other well.
- **Build in breaks:** Schedule back-to-back meetings for 25 or 50 minutes to give yourself enough time in between.

Tips for effective and efficient meetings
- **Make sure you really need a meeting** before scheduling it. Can it be resolved by a phone call or email instead?
- **Every meeting should have a purpose;** to make a decision or complete an action together. Use emails for updates.
- **Do not schedule more time than you need.** Most hour long meetings can be completed in 30-45 minutes.
- **Start and end on time.** Don’t wait for stragglers—it only encourages them.
- **Only invite the people who absolutely need to be there.** The more people in a meeting, the less that gets done.
- **Every meeting should have someone clearly assigned to run it.** If it’s not you, name someone else.
- **If you want people to read something ahead of time,** send it at least three hours prior. Avoid giving out several handouts at the beginning of the meeting. They’ll start flipping through and be distracted.
- **Set an agenda, and share it** at the beginning of the meeting to keep everyone on track.
- **Do not check your phone or email** during meetings. Everyone can see, and they’ll start doing the same.
- **Keep track of next steps.** Any action items with an assignment should be sent around as a reminder after the meeting.
- **If the conversation goes off topic,** it is acceptable to redirect. A simple, "Let's schedule a time to discuss that later if it's helpful, since we only have 10 minutes left," works perfectly.
- **Watch body language.** You can easily tell if people are bored, disengaged, or feel like their time is being wasted.
- **If needed, assign a note-taker,** so that you can focus on running the meeting.