

Information Matters: Get Outside!

Over the course of this series, we've taken a critical look at online spaces, exploring how they differ – often dramatically – from the physical environments we're more naturally built to inhabit. In the process, we've observed that:

- it's often difficult to distinguish between real and unreal events on the internet,
- the internet's algorithm-driven architecture serves corporate interests by amplifying users' feelings of loneliness and fear,
- unlike human brains, which need rest, the internet never stops. It churns night and day, flooding our brains with more information than we can absorb and often leaving us feeling exhausted and overwhelmed.

It's worth appreciating that each of these facts about online spaces presents a distinct challenge to our freedom.

- When we can't reliably distinguish between what's real and what isn't, it becomes harder to stay grounded in the world long enough to understand and address the issues that actually matter.
- When fear and isolation are allowed to cloud our thinking, we become more susceptible to helplessness, making us easier to manipulate.
- When we're tired and overloaded, it becomes harder to stay alert and push back against efforts to erode and even take away our rights.

Taken together, these effects make the internet a powerful and effective tool for those who stand to gain from our disconnection and lack of empowerment. So, what's the answer? How do we reclaim our power?

Start by stepping away from your screens. Get outside. Move your body. Engage with the natural world and, most importantly, reconnect with others in real life.

Physical spaces offer something online spaces can't: the opportunity to be fully present with one another. In-person interactions allow for the kind of deep, spontaneous connection that builds trust, empathy, and mutual understanding. When we gather face to face—whether through conversation, shared meals, collaborative work, or simply spending time side by side—we access a different quality of attention. We read each other's tone, body language, and emotion more clearly. We feel seen and heard in a way that's difficult to replicate online.

These real-world experiences ground us. They remind us that we're not just isolated individuals scrolling through endless content, but part of a shared world that we can shape together. They are the foundation of strong friendships, vibrant communities, and a healthy democracy. If we want to resist manipulation and reclaim our agency, then reconnecting in physical space—with people, with nature, and with ourselves—is not just valuable; it's essential!