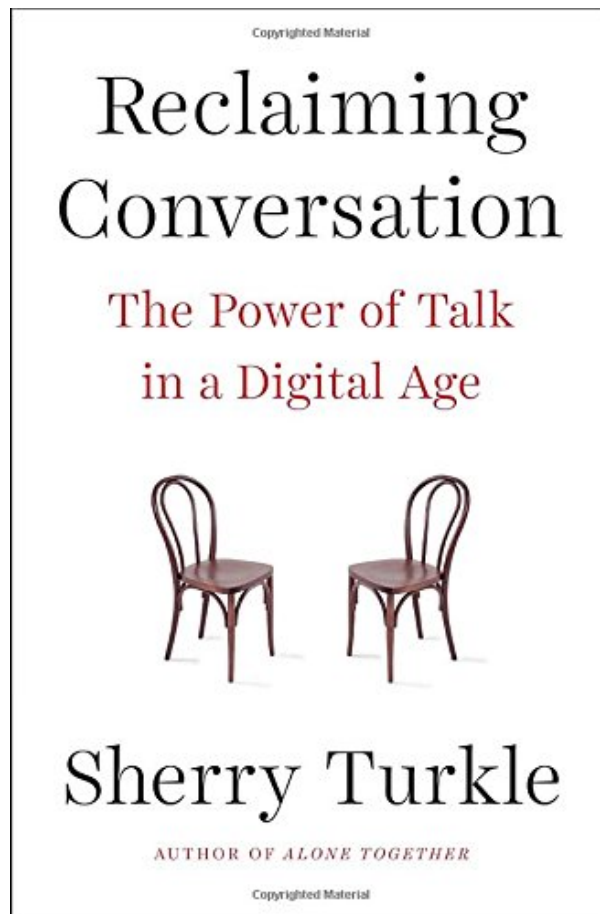


**RECLAIMING CONVERSATION: THE
POWER OF TALK IN A DIGITAL AGE BY
SHERRY TURKLE**



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Reclaiming Conversation

The Power of Talk
in a Digital Age



Sherry Turkle

AUTHOR OF ALONE TOGETHER

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Renowned media scholar Sherry Turkle investigates how a flight from conversation undermines our relationships, creativity, and productivity—and why reclaiming face-to-face conversation can help us regain lost ground.

We live in a technological universe in which we are always communicating. And yet we have sacrificed conversation for mere connection.

Preeminent author and researcher Sherry Turkle has been studying digital culture for over thirty years. Long an enthusiast for its possibilities, here she investigates a troubling consequence: at work, at home, in politics, and in love, we find ways around conversation, tempted by the possibilities of a text or an email in which we don't have to look, listen, or reveal ourselves.

We develop a taste for what mere connection offers. The dinner table falls silent as children compete with phones for their parents' attention. Friends learn strategies to keep conversations going when only a few people are looking up from their phones. At work, we retreat to our screens although it is conversation at the water cooler that increases not only productivity but commitment to work. Online, we only want to share opinions that our followers will agree with – a politics that shies away from the real conflicts and solutions of the public square.

The case for conversation begins with the necessary conversations of solitude and self-reflection. They are endangered: these days, always connected, we see loneliness as a problem that technology should solve. Afraid of being alone, we rely on other people to give us a sense of ourselves, and our capacity for empathy and relationship suffers. We see the costs of the flight from conversation everywhere: conversation is the cornerstone for democracy and in business it is good for the bottom line. In the private sphere, it builds empathy, friendship, love, learning, and productivity.

But there is good news: we are resilient. Conversation cures.

Based on five years of research and interviews in homes, schools, and the workplace, Turkle argues that we have come to a better understanding of where our technology can and cannot take us and that the time is right to reclaim conversation. The most human—and humanizing—thing that we do.

The virtues of person-to-person conversation are timeless, and our most basic technology, talk, responds to our modern challenges. We have everything we need to start, we have each other.

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Most helpful customer reviews

52 of 54 people found the following review helpful.

A REAL wake up call for us millennials

By Amazon Customer

I'm 25. When I'm with friends, we have our phones out all the time, even at dinner and movies. And only sometimes, someone will object. I've never given much thought to why - actually I didn't even realize I had my phone in my hand 24/7. This book is a real eye-opener. When I'm busy on my phone, I did try to listen to what other people are saying, but I recognize now that I was barely paying attention to them.

In this beautifully written, passionate book, Turkle discusses how what I'm doing has become how conversation has moved in the culture as a whole. So many of us divide our attention between our friends and our phones, between our co-workers and our email. Now in team meetings, I make sure to keep my phone in my bag and at dinner, I don't put it on the table. Turkle is not didactic or preachy, but this book is filled with great examples of the costs of a life lived with an eye to "elsewhere." This is a great read and a real wake up call.

65 of 69 people found the following review helpful.

Would You Rather Text than Talk?

By Sam Horn, Intrigue Expert

Have you watched Sherry Turkle's TED talk - Connected, But Alone? - which has more than 3 million views?

If so, you already know she is a masterful communicator. She held a ballroom of 5000 American Society of Association Executives spellbound at their annual convention this summer with the backstory of her research for "Reclaiming Conversation."

A few of the intriguing sound-bites from that talk (and this book) include:

- a. "We will always be lonely unless we learn to like being alone."
- b. "We let digital devices dictate our daily life at great cost. They are an assault on compassion."
- c. "What people want most is autonomy over where they put their attention."
- d. Studies report a 40% drop in empathy - which is the crucial ability to be present, put ourselves in the other person's shoes and imagine what they're feeling.
- e. People rather text than talk - because online they can take their time to edit and get it RIGHT.
- f. Even a silenced phone on a table changes the quality of conversation - because people are reluctant to go deep and be personal if they think they'll be interrupted.
- g. Our inability to be alone with our thoughts and our fear of conversation ("It's so open-ended, I can't control it:) is the new "Silent Spring."

The good news is, this book is not just a cautionary tale. It has a prescription for how we can "make time and space for face-to-face."

An important book that can help readers re-connect with what and who is most important - each other.

34 of 38 people found the following review helpful.

I waited a long time for this book to come ...

By Joy Freed

I waited a long time for this book to come out. Dr. Turkle is a powerful voice in our culture today. As I work at a University I see firsthand how vulnerable we all are to substituting true intimacy and conversation for mere connections. I can sit for hours tapping away at my computer and forget the people sitting in their offices all around me - isolated - in need of deep and meaningful conversations. I walk around campus and see people looking down at screens, on the buses, at dining tables, waiting in lines. I join with Dr. Turkle to look up and help reclaim the conversations that keep us human. Thank you Dr. Turkle for writing such a deep, thoughtful, and comprehensive book!

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