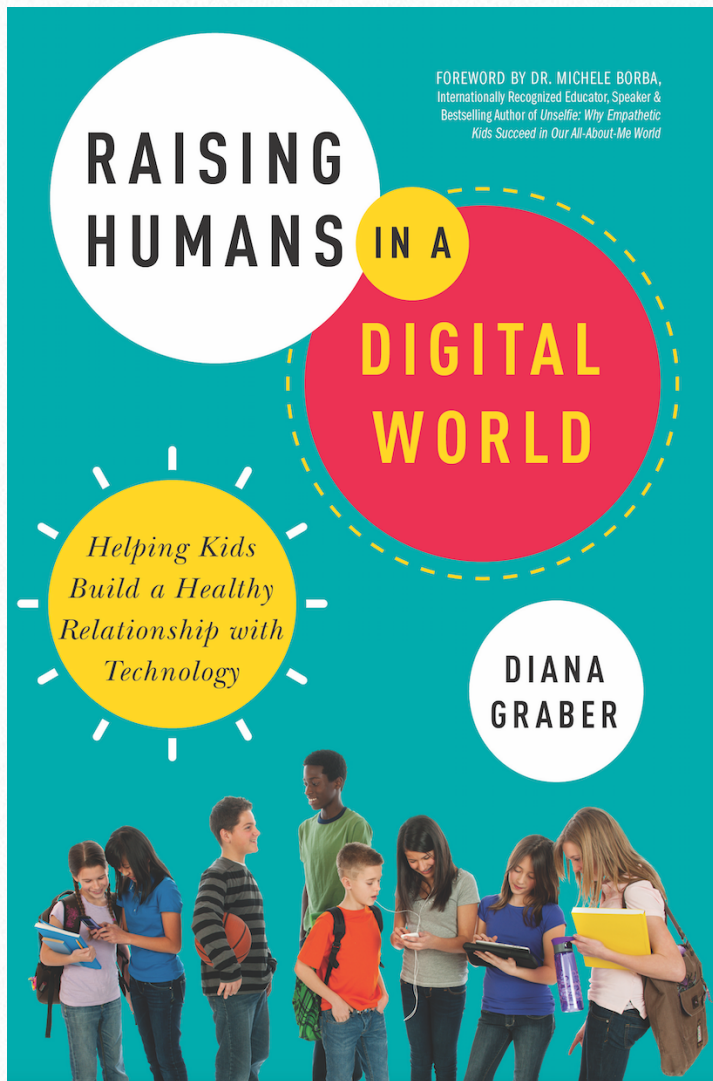


# DISCUSSION GUIDE

## "Raising Humans in a Digital World: Helping Kids Build a Healthy Relationship with Technology."

By: Diana Graber



*"Exceptionally well organized and presented, 'Raising Humans in a Digital World' is packed from cover to cover with at-home discussion topics and enjoyable activities that any busy family can slip into their daily routine. Full of practical tips grounded in academic research and hands-on experience, today's parents finally have what they've been waiting for -- a guide to raising digital kids who will become the positive and successful leaders our world desperately needs....very highly recommended for family and community library Parenting & Computer Literacy collections."*

— **Library Bookwatch**

*"Down-to-earth and direct, her advice is exactly what parents need to hear...If you've ever considered how to help your child understand the digital world—and to use it wisely—this book is for you!"*

— **Seattle Book Review**

*"Graber's suggestions provide a great primer for parents on how to guide their children on using technology in a positive way while avoiding some of the major pitfalls. I can also see it being used by educators who want to advocate for digital literacy training in their schools."*

— **MotherDaughterBookClub.com**

### HOW TO FACILITATE YOUR DISCUSSION GROUP

- 1. Invite members to join and decide upon a regular meeting time.**
- 2. Assign a discussion leader, or rotate this role at each meeting.**
- 3. Ask group members to read one chapter and do one activity (from the chapter) before each meeting.**
- 4. Use the questions that follow to facilitate a lively group discussion about each chapter (or come up with your own questions!).**
- 5. Have group members discuss the activity they chose.**
- 6. At the end of each meeting, summarize your take-aways.**
- 7. Have fun!**



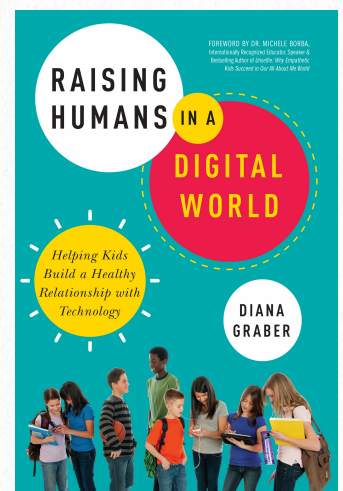
# “Raising Humans in a Digital World: Helping Kids Build a Healthy Relationship with Technology” Discussion Guide

## INTRODUCTION & CHAPTER 1: A DIGITAL JOURNEY BEGINS

1. What do you hope to gain by reading this book? What are your biggest challenges when it comes raising kids in a digital age?
2. Today’s children are growing up in a world that is very different from the one adults grew up in. Discuss the most significant differences between your own childhood and that of your children/grandchildren/students.
3. What does it mean to be a “citizen” in today’s world?
4. Fully 44 percent of children under the age of one use mobile devices every single day. By the age of two, that jumps to 77 percent. Discuss what impact this may have upon a child’s cognitive, social, and/or emotional development.
5. Child-rearing is hard work! Many a parent has handed a young child a connected device in order to get a few moments of well-earned peace. But what alternatives are available to distract a fidgety child?
6. Most long-term studies of the effects of screens upon children involve television and video, not interactive devices. How might today’s screens be different from the screens we watched as children? Are they better, worse, or just different?
7. One in ten children between four and seventeen years of age have been diagnosed with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). There is no consensus on what is causing this increase. Discuss the factors you think might be contributing to this rise?
8. According to the Technology in Early Education (TEC) Center at the Erikson Institute, “When used intentionally and appropriately, technology and interactive media are effective tools to support learning and development.” List some “intentional” and “appropriate” ways to use technology with young children.
9. “Children and Screens” recommend the following four guidelines for using screens with young children. Discuss ways you might implement these guidelines in your own household.
  - \* Set boundaries.
  - \* Monitor use, behavior, and content.
  - \* Be clear about what is acceptable.
  - \* Engage and lead by example.
10. Did you do any of the “Cyber Civics Moments” activities suggested in the Introduction and/or Chapter 1? If so, share your results with the group.

## CHAPTER 2: LEARNING TO BE HUMAN

1. Scholar Henry Jenkins writes of the urgency to help youth “develop the cultural competencies and social skills needed for full involvement” in the emerging media environment. To successfully participate in this environment, young people must develop the “new” literacies listed on the following page.





## CHAPTER 2: LEARNING TO BE HUMAN, continued

The “new” media literacies

:

- \* **Play**
- \* **Multitasking**
- \* **Transmedia Navigation**
- \* **Performance**
- \* **Distributed Cognition**
- \* **Networking**
- \* **Simulation**
- \* **Collective Intelligence**
- \* **Negotiation**
- \* **Appropriation**
- \* **Judgment**

Have each person in your group choose one of these skills and discuss how their children/grandchildren/students might be developing that skill *without* using technology. Discuss how these skills will be used online.

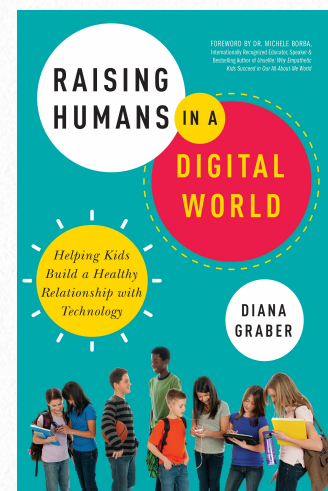
2. Researcher Alexandra Samuel suggests that there are three types of digital parents:

- \* **Digital mentors:** Parents who play an active role in guiding their kids onto the internet.
- \* **Digital limiters:** Parents who focus on minimizing their children’s use of technology.
- \* **Digital enablers.** Parents who trust their children to make their own decisions online.

What kind of digital parent are you? Discuss the pro’s and con’s of each parenting style.

3. The book suggests using “Digital On-Ramps” to introduce children to technology “slowly and developmentally appropriately.” Here are some suggested on-ramps. Come up with three or four more for each age range.

<b>AGES 0–2</b>	* Videoconference with loved ones, with child on lap and parent providing explanation.
<b>AGES 3–6</b>	* Co-view educational content, with parent explaining. * Write emails together to friends and family. * Send texts and photos together to relatives and friends.
<b>AGES 7–9</b>	* Play child-friendly video games together. * Find and use creative apps together, like a drawing app. * Keep online notes, recipes, homework reminders, and more. * If you go on a family trip, keep a digital journal, and post the photos/videos you take.
<b>AGES 10–12</b>	* Do school research together. * Help your children pursue their out-of-school interests online. * Find homework help or tutorial videos online to assist with schoolwork. * Show them (or ask them to show you!) how to download and read ebooks and music.





# “Raising Humans in a Digital World: Helping Kids Build a Healthy Relationship with Technology” Discussion Guide

## CHAPTER 2: LEARNING TO BE HUMAN, continued

4. Ethical thinking is one of two “e”ssential ingredients mentioned in the book. Until children reach about twelve or thirteen years of age, most aren’t equipped with the cognitive ability to engage in ethical thinking. Discuss some ethical situations (online) that might prove difficult for a young child to navigate.
5. Even though most social media networks require users to be at least thirteen years of age to open an account, lots of young kids simply lie about their ages online. What, if anything, can or should be done about this?
6. Another “e”ssential ingredient is empathy. Unfortunately empathy is on a steep decline. Between 1979 and 2009, American college students’ scores on two measures of empathy dropped a whopping 40 percent, with the steepest decline occurring from 2000 onward. Discuss what you think might be contributing to this trend.
7. Dr. Michele Borba recommends the following strategies to “grow empathy.” What can you add to this list?
  - \* Set up digitally unplugged family time.
  - \* Teach kids to look into others’ eyes. Talk emotions. Point them out at every age, but particularly when children are young.
  - \* Read books and see movies that are emotionally charged.
  - \* Take advantage of mealtimes, bedtimes, and carpool to connect emotionally with children.
8. One of the most effective ways to build human skills in digital kids is also one of the simplest. Tell stories. Talk about the stories *you* use to help your children gain empathy for others.
9. Did you do any of the “Cyber Civics Moments” activities suggested in Chapter 2? If so, share your results with the group.

## CHAPTER 3: REPUTATION

1. According to a recent Kaplan Test Prep survey, more than two-thirds of colleges (68 percent) say it’s “fair game” to visit an applicant’s social media profile to help them decide who gets in. Nearly one in ten of the colleges surveyed said they had revoked an incoming student’s offer based on something they found online. How are you preparing your children for this new reality?
2. In another Kaplan survey, of those admissions officers who do check a prospective student’s social media sites, 47 percent report finding information that gave them a positive impression of prospective students—up from 37 percent the previous year. What kind of “positive” content might a young person post online? Give examples.
3. Does your school help its students understand how to maintain a positive “digital reputation? If so, explain how (if not, ask them why not!).
4. Do you think it’s fair for young people to be judged by the digital mistakes they might make when they are young? How might we help children mitigate this risk?





# "Raising Humans in a Digital World: Helping Kids Build a Healthy Relationship with Technology" Discussion Guide

## CHAPTER 3: REPUTATION, continued

5. Ninety-two percent of two-year-old children already have an online profile, with photos and information having been posted within weeks of their birth. Have you ever contributed to the digital reputation of a young person in your life? If so, how?
6. Have you, or someone you know (no names please), ever engaged in "oversharenting"?
7. Digital expert Sue Scheff recommends that parents who want to post images of their children take advantage of Facebook's "list" feature. She says, "When you create a list on Facebook, you can easily narrow down who your posts are seen by. So, if you want to share photos and videos of your kids, you can make sure they are seen by a select list of just family and friends." Do you use Facebook's "list" feature? If so, explain how you use it. Do you employ other strategies to limit who sees images of your children? If so, what are they?
8. As you learned in the book, when you "tag" people (or things) in social media, you create a link to their profile. If you or a "friend" tag someone in your post, the post could be visible to the audience you select plus friends of the tagged person. This impacts your digital reputation as well as the digital reputation of the tagged person. Do you ever tag others, or get tagged yourself? Do your children tag others, or get tagged? Do they understand how this may impact their digital reputations? Discuss.
9. Did you do any of the "Cyber Civics Moments" activities suggested in Chapter 3? If so, share your results with the group.

## CHAPTER 4: SCREEN TIME

1. Screen time is one of today's biggest parental concerns. Do you worry about screen time? If so, share your concerns with the group.
2. Have you ever tried to get children to abstain from using screens? If so, what did you do? How did they react? What were your results?
3. Although "internet addiction" is not an official clinical diagnosis, a 2016 Common Sense Media report found that 50 percent of teens say they "feel addicted" to mobile devices. List some strategies you could implement that might help children *not* feel the pull of technology?
4. Screens are designed to capture and hold attention. Do you think technology designers have a social responsibility to keep the vulnerabilities of children in mind when designing new products? If so, what actions might consumers take to make this happen?
5. Do you feel anxious or stressed when you hear the beep of an incoming text message? The ping of a news alert? Discuss how children respond to electronic notifications. How can we eliminate this stress from their lives?
6. In response to public concern about screen time, some developers have started adding features to their products that monitor how much time people spend on their phones (i.e., Apple's new "Screen Time"). Discuss any other features your family may use.
7. Do you use parental control software? If so, what do you use and how do you use it?





## CHAPTER 4: SCREEN TIME, continued

8. Following are the screen time guidelines recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). Does your family follow these guidelines? Do you find them challenging to follow? Why or why not?
  - \* For children younger than eighteen months, avoid use of all screen media other than video chatting.
  - \* Parents of children eighteen to twenty-four months of age who want to introduce digital media should choose high-quality programming and watch it with their children, to help them understand what they’re seeing.
  - \* For children ages two to five years, limit screen use to one hour per day of high-quality programs. Parents should co-view media with children, to help them understand what they are seeing and apply it to the world around them.
  - \* For children ages six and older, place consistent limits on the time spent using media, and the types of media, and make sure media does not supplant adequate sleep, physical activity, and other behaviors essential to health.
9. It’s important for parents to model restraint when it comes to their own screen time. How are you faring as a digital role model?
10. In the book, several ideas were presented for positive ways to use technology in the great outdoors. Can you think of more?
11. Did you do any of the “Cyber Civics Moments” activities suggested in Chapter 4? If so, share your results with the group.

## CHAPTER 5: RELATIONSHIPS

1. There’s a difference between “cyberbullying” (behavior that is online, intentional, repeated, and harmful), “digital drama” (mean online behavior that falls short of harmful), old-fashioned “teasing,” and simple “miscommunication”. Give examples of each type of behavior and discuss when you might have confused one for another.
2. Making and maintaining peer relationships has always been a tricky business. Today this developmental task is even more challenging, as it’s taking place in an environment devoid of social cues, facial expressions, or adult role models to provide guidance. Have there been times when you’ve found online relationships to be tricky? How about your children?
3. “We are hardwired to be social animals,” says Dr. Pamela Rutledge. “Young people have always focused on social activities that help them connect with the world outside their family of origin.” Discuss how your children might be using technology to engage in this critical task of adolescence and young adulthood.
4. Do your children play video games? If so, which ones? Do you find managing their game time challenging? What other challenges might gaming present for your family?
5. In “The Benefits of Playing Video Games,” researchers say that gamers can translate the prosocial skills learned from playing with others to “peer and family relations outside the gaming environment.” Do you find this to be true with the gamers in your life? If so, give examples.





# "Raising Humans in a Digital World: Helping Kids Build a Healthy Relationship with Technology" Discussion Guide

## CHAPTER 5: RELATIONSHIPS, continued

6. In her book, author Jean Twenge writes that adolescent self-esteem, life satisfaction, and happiness have plunged since 2012, the same year smartphone ownership reached the 50 percent mark in the United States. While she makes a compelling case that the smartphone is to blame for this problem, some researchers think there could be other factors at play (i.e., it could be that depressed kids are spending more time on social media, or that non-depressed kids are spending less time on social media). Where do you stand on this issue?
7. Researchers Andrew Przybylski and Netta Weinstein speculate that a well-being "sweet spot" might exist when it comes to how much time teens spend using technology. Do you agree? Have you observed a "sweet spot" of time for your own children/grandchildren/students? If so, what is it?
8. For many teens, monitoring their social media feeds becomes a time-consuming task that includes tracking their "likes." Have you observed this with your own children/grandchildren/students? If so, how do you discuss this with them?
9. Sexting, the sending, receiving, or forwarding of any sexually explicit message, photograph, or image between digital devices (most commonly cell phones), is a very serious digital age issue. Have you discussed sexting with your children? Do they know that they could get in as much trouble for *receiving* a sexting message as sending one? Do you know what the laws pertaining to sexting are in your state? Discuss.
10. Did you do any of the "Cyber Civics Moments" activities suggested in Chapter 5? If so, share your results with the group.

## CHAPTER 6: PRIVACY

1. In and out of school, kids give personal information to the apps, games, websites, and anything else they use online. Their personal data is commonly collected when they use technology at school, or for school, too. "All of this data may be used in ways never imagined," says attorney Bradley Shear. Are your children aware of what personal data they give away? Are you?
2. A 2015 report released by the Family Online Safety Institute (FOSI) states that while most parents believe technology affects their children's lives in positive ways, they remain concerned about their children's personal safety and privacy. FOSI found that parents are more concerned about privacy than about performance in school, social relationships, physical health, technology use, and behavior. Is this true for you? Explain.
3. Do you read the privacy policies or terms of agreements of the apps and services *you* use? Do you know what *cookies*, *third parties*, or *log file information* is? Discuss an app, service, or website you may have signed up for recently without reading the fine print first.
4. Today, we have an internet that largely decides for us what we want and like based upon the personal information we have provided it. Give an example of personalized information and/or products the Internet has served you based upon your preferences.





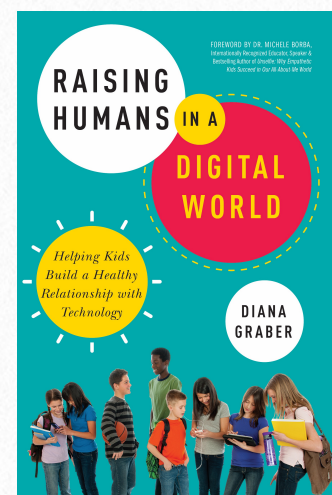
# “Raising Humans in a Digital World: Helping Kids Build a Healthy Relationship with Technology” Discussion Guide

## CHAPTER 6: PRIVACY, continued

5. The book explored “filter bubbles” and “echo chambers.” Have you ever found yourself in one? How do you help your children understand this phenomenon?
6. Eli Pariser said, “We need to make sure that they [internet services] also show us things that are uncomfortable or challenging or important. . . . We really need the internet to be that thing that we all dreamed of it being. We need it to connect us all together. We need it to introduce us to new ideas and new people and different perspectives. And it’s not going to do that if it leaves us all isolated in a web of one.” Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?
7. In 2015, a comprehensive study on the relationship between youth and online privacy revealed that teens “care more about social privacy than they do about privacy in the context of third-parties and big data/information privacy.” Do you find this to be true with your own children? Explain and give examples.
8. Teens often employ creative methods to maintain privacy online, particularly to avoid parental surveillance, such as moving to new sites or encoding hidden meaning into their posts by using cultural references, slang, and emojis. Can you give examples of kids employing any of these tactics, or others?
9. Let’s talk about selfies. Do your children take and post them? Do you? How do you feel about selfies? Did the book make you think differently about them?
10. Did you do any of the “Cyber Civics Moments” activities suggested in Chapter 6? If so, share your results with the group.

## CHAPTER 7: THINKING CRITICALLY

1. Media literacy is defined as the ability to access, analyze, create, evaluate, and act using all forms of communication. How are your children learning these skills in school? At home?
2. Even very young children have heard the term “fake news.” Some children even call things they don’t like, or don’t agree with, “fake news.” How (or have you?) discussed this term with your children?
3. A *BuzzFeed News* analysis found that, during the months prior to the 2016 election, the top twenty fake news stories outperformed the top twenty legitimate news stories on Facebook—i.e., they received more shares, reactions, and comments. Do you think *you* might have unknowingly liked or shared a “fake” news story? Explain.
4. According to researchers from the Stanford Graduate School of Education, “Our ‘digital natives’ may be able to flit between Facebook and Twitter while simultaneously uploading a selfie to Instagram and texting a friend. But when they evaluate information that flows through social media channels, they are easily duped.” Do you find this to be true with your own children? Give examples.





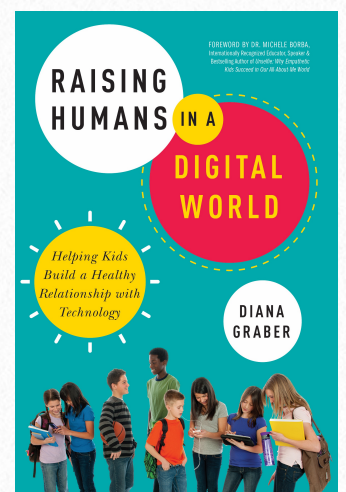
# “Raising Humans in a Digital World: Helping Kids Build a Healthy Relationship with Technology” Discussion Guide

## CHAPTER 7: THINKING CRITICALLY, continued

5. Today we live in a “participatory culture,” where people not only consume media but also create and distribute it. Think of your children’s media use. Do they primarily “consume” media? Do they “participate” or “produce” media? Give examples.
6. *Fandom* is a subculture of passionate fans who bond over their favorite books, TV shows, movies, bands, or any other form of pop culture (“Potterheads,” fans of the Harry Potter book series, are a good example). In a participatory culture, fans don’t have to wait for their next book club meeting to share their passions. They can express and share their enthusiasm with thousands, sometimes millions, of other fans in a myriad of ways online. Have you, or your children, ever participated in an online *fandom*?
7. Have your children used technology to enhance or express their creativity? Can you give examples?
8. Does your school have a technology policy? If so what does it address? What have you learned from this book that you might want to encourage your school to include in its policy?
9. Did you do any of the “Cyber Civics Moments” activities suggested in Chapter 7? If so, share your results with the group.

## CHAPTER 8: DIGITAL LEADERSHIP

1. Many apps and websites are adding socially beneficial features to their products—to combat bullying, manage screen time, etc.—sometimes in response to public pressure. Can you think of some examples?
2. “Kids (online) are capable of really good things,” says #ICANHELP’s Matt Soeth. “But what they’re looking for is an adult who will support them, who will guide them, and really push them.” Think of a time you may have encouraged your children/grandchildren/students to do something productive or positive online.
3. Digital parenting is hard work. But even if it feels uncomfortable to open a Snapchat account or to try Minecraft, it’s important for adults to at least attempt to keep up or show interest in what their kids are doing online. Give an example of something new you’ve learned or tried online recently? Have you had a discussion with your digital kids about something they’re doing online?
4. How would you respond to these digital scenarios?
  - \* Your family has a no-media policy during the school week. Your son visits a neighbor’s house and while there, you learn, he plays two hours of Fortnite. What do you do?
  - \* Your nine year old daughter wants to open an account on Instagram because all of her friends have one. What do you tell her?
  - \* Your son just broke up with his first girlfriend, and now he constantly sees her with other kids, including boys, in social media posts. What do you say to him?





## CHAPTER 8: DIGITAL LEADERSHIP, continued

5. What is your most important take-away from this book?
6. Will this book change your digital parenting style. If so, how?
7. What have you disagreed with in this book? How has it challenged your beliefs? Explain.
8. What at-home activity did you find most valuable in this book?
9. What can our schools and communities do to help kids gain the skills they need to be humans in a digital world?

Thank you so much for taking the time to read and discuss this book! If you've made it this far, congratulations!! Please [contact me](#) if you'd like me to Skype in to your last meeting and discuss the book with you!

Also, please don't let your digital learning stop here. Visit [Cyberwise](http://www.cyberwise.org), ([www.cyberwise.org](http://www.cyberwise.org)), aka "No Grownup Left Behind," and please sign up for our [newsletter](http://bit.ly/cyberwisesignup) ([bit.ly/cyberwisesignup](http://bit.ly/cyberwisesignup)).

Finally, if your school isn't already teaching [Cyber Civics](http://www.cybercivics.com) ([www.cybercivics.com](http://www.cybercivics.com)), Please take a moment to learn more about this in-school digital literacy program. We'd be happy to send you a free lesson too. Just email us at [support@cybercivics.com](mailto:support@cybercivics.com)

Finally, digital parenting is hard work. But remember, the time you put in to "building your house" now, will pay off in spades later. I promise!!

Happy Parenting!

Diana Graber, Author: "Raising Humans in a Digital World"

