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Reclaiming Conversation: The Power Of Talk In A Digital Age

Sherry Turkle, Ph.D.

*Abby Rockefeller Mauzé Professor of the Social Studies of Science and Technology, MIT
Founder and Director, MIT Initiative on Technology and Self
Author, Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other*

Friday, October 9, 2015, 7:00 PM
Skokie School Auditorium
520 Glendale Ave., Winnetka

Free and open to the public. Book sale and signing.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: SHERRY TURKLE, Ph.D.

CONTACT: Lonnie Stonitsch, Executive Director of FAN, lonnie@familyactionnetwork.net

Friday, October 9, 2015, Reclaiming Conversation: The Power Of Talk In A Digital Age, 7:00 PM, Skokie School Auditorium, 520 Glendale Ave., Winnetka, 60093. In discussing her brand-new book *Reclaiming Conversation: The Power of Talk In A Digital Age*, **Sherry Turkle, Ph.D.** notes that she removes her iPhone from the room when doing interviews because “research shows that the very sight of the iPhone anywhere in your line of visions actually changes the conversation.” Likely this gives you pause as you think about the last time you didn't have your mobile phone present during your waking (or sleeping) hours. The benefits of technology are numerous and a settled point – for example, you may be reading this text electronically. Yet the pervasiveness of communication technology also has its consequences – the always-on, always connected society is becoming less empathic, less compassionate, less focused, less intimate.

Turkle has spent the last 30 years studying the psychology of people’s relationships with technology. She is the **Abby Rockefeller Mauzé Professor of the Social Studies of Science and Technology** at MIT. A licensed clinical psychologist, she is the founder and director of the **MIT Initiative on Technology and Self**, and is a recipient of a **Guggenheim** and **Rockefeller Humanities Fellowship**, as well as a **Harvard Centennial Medal** and a Fellow of the **American Academy of Arts and Sciences**.

In *Reclaiming Conversation*, Turkle explores how our dependence on technology has led to a “flight from conversation.” Real conversations lay the groundwork for creative collaborations, empathy, intimacy, social action, education, and business. Using a “3 chairs” metaphor borrowed from Henry David Thoreau’s *Walden* – “I had three chairs in my house; one for solitude, two for friendship, three for society.” – Turkle frames her case for conversation by looking at what has been lost in the pursuit of continual connection. She also adds a fourth chair – our relationship with the artificial and virtual, with companion robots, “caring machines,” simulacra of sociability.

In her book’s final chapter, Turkle sums up a core issue: “In our new culture of connection, we are lonely but afraid of intimacy.” We settle for the “illusion of companionship without the demands of friendship.”

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