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We live in a time where 'google' happens to be amongst the first 100 words a child learns -- a time where we do not have to extend our hand to make a friend, just a tap of our finger on a smartphone is enough. Today, a whole universe of information is available at our fingertips and an entire network of people, known and unknown seem to be apparently connected to each other, yet not really there in the true sense. Families separated by thousands of miles can see and talk to each other with the help of technology. Children from remote villages get a glimpse of the world outside through a host of technological instruments. In the field of medicine, medical diagnosis greatly relies on the accuracy of the medical technology that it uses.

As creators and users of technology, we have been greatly empowered. Yet this power often comes at the cost of increased reliance on the same technology. Our enthusiasm to explore and know about life is often limited to Internet searches. We do not go out and explore nature. While it is of great help to have information available at the touch of a button, nothing can replace the experience of touching the snow or feeling the coolness of a flowing river, experiencing the majesty of the Colorado Rockies or the tranquility of Yosemite.

While it is much easier to learn about anything by connecting to the Internet, the enthusiasm of discovering and learning firsthand is vanishing at a rapid pace and only the virtual experience remains. This, by no means is the real thing.

We need to discover ways in which technology can help facilitate our spirit of enquiry. What is the middle-path in the use of technology and how do we find it? It is a fine line that balances knowing how much to depend on information and when to rely on intuition. It is a skill, to deepen our knowledge with information, yet broaden our vision with the real experience. This skill and balance are essential to avoid the risk of overexposure and fatigue, to keep the creativity flowing and the enthusiasm rising. This is where spirituality becomes a big asset.

Spirituality is not a dogmatic rule. It is dynamic action, continuously accommodating and adapting to changes in circumstances and the environment. It makes you ever accepting of change. This ability to adapt is essential in a technological environment where the need to upgrade and update oneself is imperative to staying ahead. In the race to keep up with technology, we should not forget the mind that created it. We are used to charging our phones and laptops. But what can we do to re-charge ourselves? For the human mind to be more effective, it needs to be charged through meditation.

Meditation brings centeredness. It is the subtler technology for mind management. It calms the agitated mind. It connects us to our source and brings us back home to ourselves. It is important that we connect to the inner-net and not just the inter-net.

A mother knows intuitively what her child needs even before the child begins to speak. She is a master of the language of the heart. This ability to connect with life around us is innate and needs to be nurtured. Spirituality is the key to this cosmic connection. When we know that we are the source, that we are ever connected to the supreme intelligence, we can move ahead with a sense of belongingness and responsibility for the transformation we bring about with the technologies that are available to us. The same finger that can unleash a nuclear bomb can also spread peace. Walking this line of balance with effortless grace is the skill that meditation brings in us so naturally.

Living the values of caring and sharing, of seeking the highest truth and ultimate joy, of giving love and wisdom, are the signs of an individual blossoming to his or her full potential through spirituality and technology should be an aide in this journey to make life a celebration.

The author is the chairperson of the International Women's Conference on "Women and Technology", Feb. 3-5, 2012. For details, visit <http://iwc.artofliving.org/iwc/> or follow @voicesofiwc.

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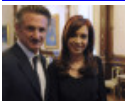
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