

Arguments About What To Watch On TV

Once upon a time, people argued about what to listen to on the radio. Later, what to watch on TV. With only set in their homes, only one programme could be on at a time. There were heated arguments over what to listen to and, later, watch. Counter programming created more arguments. A western versus a comedy variety show, romance versus horror. Compromises became necessary—in bitter families, they scraped up the money for another TV. Two TVs in one home was considered a luxury, but increasingly more families felt the need.

Today families watch TV while also on their computers or cell phones. Sitting together in the living room, they watch or read or listen to their own programmes, often with ear buds. Choices are no longer limited to three TV networks, all with similar shows. Randall lived in such a family, with his wife and three children spending their evenings, when at home, watching or texting or listening, in the living room, at times their own rooms. He was uncomfortable with such evenings—apart from pleasantries, no one said anything relevant.

Randall believed families should talk, disclose concerns, share lives. His asked to send them texts.

It is not an age of quiet reflection, as when folks read books and newspapers. It is an age of multi-tasking—nothing gets its due attention, nothing is done quite right. The obvious solution? Cut off the electronics. But Randall knew the electronics were addictive (and had positive aspects.)

No one would give up their cell phone or computer or even TV voluntarily. Also: Randall pondered if they started talking, would not arguments follow? He knew arguing was important but certainly did not look forward to it. It was a price to pay.

Randall's solution was that each evening, taking turns, one of his family chose a podcast or something on their computer or the TV—and they all had to watch it together. After the first, they returned to their phones and computers, but by the third week, they started to talk the podcast or TV show, then about what happened to them that day.

Randall was pleased. Even with the occasional...debate.