An Award Winning Documentary Film by Joni Siani

CELLING YOUR SOUL

An honest conversation about our love/hate relationship with our devices from the first **"digitally socialized"** generation and... what we can do about it.

A NO APP FOR LIFE PRODUCTION
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bullfrogfilms

Photo Courtesy of Taylor O'Malley Photography

I believe that before we teach our children how to talk to a *million* people in a fraction of a second, we should first teach them how to talk to just *one.*

Before we allow them to tune into the static sounds of our mediated world, we should teach them how to tune into the quiet whisper of their own reflective thoughts.

Instead of working on your *brand,* work on *yourself.*

Excerpt from
Celling Your Soul
Joni Siani

No App For Life

FILM GUIDE
and
NO APP FOR LIFE CHALLENGE

Joni Siani
Companion to the documentary
Celling Your Soul

Available from
Bullfrog Films

No App For Life and *Bullfrog Films* invite you to make the most of your *Celling Your Soul* film screening by offering additional materials to elevate the conversation and take action! Use the film questions provided in this guide to provoke thoughts and hear honest insights from your students. Then challenge your viewers to connect more authentically in order to experience deeper and more fulfilling connections.

Celling Your Soul has a motivating affect, inspiring viewers to make changes in their own digital behavior to experience the same positive results as the students in the film. The *No App For Life* challenge offers a powerful activity and modified "digital cleanse" designed as a personal guide towards more fulfilling connections.

No App For Life, LLC
www.noappforlife.com

Are you ready to take the No App For Life Challenge?

Thanks for screening the film *Celling Your Soul* and taking the first step toward a healthy tech approach to our demanding digital world!

What is the **No App For Life** Challenge?

Technology has an important place in our world. However, with the rapid acceleration of new tools coming into our lives at a demanding pace, it's important to retain the value of authentic human connectivity.

What we have learned is that we need more authentic connectivity in our lives for a greater sense of health, well-being, and personal development. As you have just witnessed in the *Celling Your Soul* documentary, we feel better and more fulfilled when we make authentic connectivity a priority.

The **No App For Life** challenge is based on the Siani System of personal communication in the digital age. This system follows three basic principles:

Honesty   Boundaries   Protocol

Honesty — The research is in, and we now must acknowledge that our 24/7 connectivity has resulted in some unintended consequences.

Boundaries — Our expectations of 24/7 connectivity and media consumption are not sustainable, and these demands are connected to increases in stress and anxiety.

Protocol — As mindful communicators, we must make the digital distinction and apply a best-practices approach to communication tools.

Now — take the challenge!

We recognize that our world has changed, and so have our social expectations. For this challenge, your objective is to examine your personal communication behavior. This challenge is designed to empower you and improve your personal skills so you can take control of communication tools and use them to best serve your needs, rather than you serving the objectives of the digital powerhouses.

For one short week, make it personal! Experience life as if this were the year 2000. Remember — this was before social media and texting! If you **_need_** a phone for emergencies, remove all apps, including texting. Keep the ringer off, store the phone away and off your body, and then only use it for phone **calls** when you have the time to have a personal and focused conversation.

One week of TFI, Technology Free Interactions. Take one week to experience the power of genuine connections and the benefits to your mental health, anx-

iety, improved relationships, and overall feeling of well-being. Take the week to listen to your own inner voice, and practice the art of listening and talking on a deeper level — with your friends, family, colleagues, and those you come in contact with on a regular basis.

It's not anti-technology, it's pro-human.

You're human; you have all the apps you need!

In this guide, we've provided a recap of what we've learned, a little bit about our organization, an invitation to join the campaign, and questions inspired by the film to discuss in a group and for reflection on your own. Use this guide for your own 7-day **No App For Life** challenge. You can do the "extreme" challenge, as the students in the film did, or this "modified" challenge. The main objective is to step back, observe the world around you, and connect with yourself first.

We've also included space for your own thoughts.

Welcome to No App For Life

No App For Life is a Media and Digital Literacy organization dedicated to developing innovative and comprehensive educational programs and media that focus on "digital distinction" in order to examine and evaluate the pros and cons of our digital world. The goal is to elevate the conversation beyond good or bad.

Our digital world is a paradox that offers both wonderful opportunities and negative influences. It's time for an honest conversation.

How do we make those distinctions and create a solid protocol of best practices? There are great apps and technologies intended for educational purposes; however, **No App For Life** focuses on creating best practices for social interactions, human bonding, digital citizenship, and human development by examining the connection tool itself and its influence on our behavior and development. **No App for Life** also considers our own human needs, how we as humans are influenced and shaped by our media, and how we're using our connection technologies.

Just because we *can* connect 24/7, does that mean we *should*?

Adults often forget just how fast things changed. Kids and young adults today had to learn to adapt to connectivity tools faster than any previous techno-

logical advances and without any guidance, simply because there was no "model for behavior."

Our digital world swept us up like a tidal wave, instantly drowning us with endless demands on connecting in a way that we have never experienced before. As each new piece of fascinating technology amazed and enchanted us with what *it* could do, we slowly lost our values for what *we* could do.

"It's not anti-technology, it's pro-human."
Joni Siani
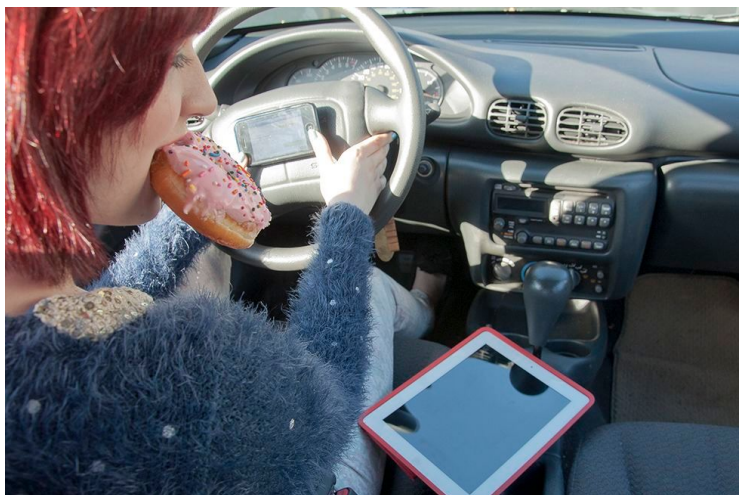
The Power of a Conversation

In 2010, Media and Communications scholar Joni Siani changed the conversation about our new digital media experience. Instead of asking her students, "What do you *think*," Siani began asking, "How do you *feel*?"

Siani was shocked to learn about the personal and emotional struggles her students were dealing with every day. Combining basic human development needs, media literacy, and interpersonal communication components, Siani and her students created a sustainable system for balanced communication in the digital world.

The No App For Life Program

- Screen the film
- Participate in group discussions
- Take the challenge!
- Review feedback from your week
- Create your own rules, guidelines, and personal contract

Students, parents, and community and organization members start the program with a screening of the award-winning film *Celling Your Soul,* available at Bullfrog Films, www.bullfrogfilms.com. This film won Best Documentary at the Boston International Kids Film Festival, won Best Documentary at the Di-

rectors Chair Film Festival, NYC, and won prestigious honors as Official Selection at twelve other film festivals, including the prestigious New Hampshire Film Festival and the New York City Independent Film Festival.

It's important to know that this film, book, and project started with a face-to-face conversation between a curious teacher and her students.

Opportunity Incentives for Participants
- Raise funds for your school or charity
- Get extra academic credit
- Participate in interviews that may be included in future media education materials

"Innovation is challenging the social norms."
Howard Schultz, Starbucks CEO

No App For Life challenges the social norms of this highly demanding world of 24/7 connectivity. In one short decade, we have totally changed the way we
- interact with one another,
- define friendship,
- personally relate to one another,
- value face-to-face communication,
- communicate verbally, and
- are informed and share information.

The **No App For Life** challenge is a healthy-tech activity designed to empower an entire generation to

shape a world of connectivity they want to live in. Technology changed; humans didn't. We still have the same needs to bond, be understood, and communicate in a way that allows us to have our needs met. Technology should serve us, not the other way around.

No App For Life encourages a critical analysis and an elevated conversation that asks the questions, "How are these changes changing us? Are we happier? What does the human experience look like in our digital age? What do *we want* it to look like?"

High school and college-age students are the most powerful generation. Historically, it has been young people who create change, as they are the global "trend setters."

> *"Nobody likes to hear the thing they love is not good for them."*
> **Dr. David Greenfield, Center for Internet and Technology Addiction**

Intellectually we know that this level of media consumption is not good for us, but we can't seem to help ourselves. This week-long exercise is intended to focus on the power of our *human apps*. How do we live without an "app for everything" mindset? How does it feel to be more authentic and more personal in our day-to-day connections? When we receive focused attention from the people we're communicating with, how does that feel? How do

we train people to communicate with us so that we are heard and understood? How do we build our own patience so that we can listen to others?

The results of a decade-long research project show that the first generation to experience a digitally socialized life are now dealing with the unintended consequences of what started out as a very cool piece of technology.

> **"When we know better, we do better."**
> **Maya Angelou**

Learning From College-Age Students

The high school graduating class of 2016 is considered the first generation to develop socially through the digital experience. We've found that because the human socialization process totally changed in a six-year period, we have to divide the demographic of the traditional "Millennial" into two separate groups to explain the change in communication behavior and values. Today's college-age students were actually the subjects of a major technological social science experiment. What have we learned?

The younger side of the millennials, the Young Millennial generation (those born between 1993 and 1999), was the first generation introduced to digital socialization in their pre-teens and teens, first through MySpace and then through Facebook. This

was the first generation who experienced making "friends" through a screen and "talking" with their thumbs through texting. The YMs show a decline in soft skills, including verbal communication, active listening, problem solving, adaptability, empathy, collaboration, negotiation, emotional intelligence, patience, civility, autonomy, and self-esteem. They know they have a problem. Because this group still has a frame of reference for life before the digital revolution, they are an impassioned group, worried about the next generation.

We're also seeing neurobiological changes — increases in stress, anxiety, ADHD, panic attacks, and depression — along with an increase in medications used to address these issues, particularly in kids and young adults.

> *3 million adolescents, 12–17, reported at least one major depressive episode in the past year.*
> *6.3 million teens, 25% of that age group, report an anxiety disorder*.
> **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**

The **No App For Life** program addresses the unintended consequences of digital socialization. The objective of the one-week challenge is to compare and contrast authentic socialization with the digital experience that is the only communication experience the Young Millennials and younger generation are familiar with.

The goal for students who participate is to learn more about themselves by examining their stress, anxiety, dependency, communication issues, and social relationships, as well as the media effects on society.

The **No App For Life** challenge allows participants to experience the world and human interaction in a more authentic way. Research shows that we tend to be happier when we actually do things on our own. We find a sense of self-satisfaction and pride. The **No App For Life** challenge gives students *permission* to opt out of their digitally demanding world for one week in order to participate in more TFI, Technology Free Interactions.

By doing the challenge as a group, students bond together. They don't have to worry about what they're missing online, because all their friends are participating as well. Most importantly, they have an opportunity to improve their social skills, and they have a break from the irresistible pull of 24/7 connectivity and social media. We have found that students feel a sense of "relief" when they have an excuse to take a break from the digital demands of their world.

"We're the first generation that cannot escape our problems at all."
Faith-Ann Bishop, age 20,
***Time* Magazine, 11-07-16**

Celling Your Soul Film Screening

Questions for Discussion
- What are your thoughts about the way we communicate today?
- If you had a magic wand and could change one thing about the ways we communicate with one another today, what would you do?
- What student in the film do you relate to most? Why?
- What questions do you have for each of the students?
- How anxious are you about what is happening online when you're not "there" or don't have access for checking?
- While you're doing your homework, how long can you focus on your assignments before you have the urge to check your phone or social media sites?
- Applying mindful communication strategies, can you identify the top three things you are checking for? For example, are you worried about what someone might be saying about you? Are you looking for responses to what you posted? Is this just a habit?
- Do you feel the way we interact with one another today is healthy?
- Have you ever had a secret wish that social media just didn't exist?

- What is one thing you secretly wish parents and teachers understood about your digital world?
- Do you use texting and social media because you feel you're not really good at articulating and communicating spontaneously?
- Why do you think Steve Jobs and other high-tech creators put strict limits on their own children's use of the technology they sell?
- Can our smart phones, apps, games, and social media cause us to be addicted to them?
- With everything our smart phones do, have we become too reliant on technology rather than on our own human apps? What does this do to us as people and in society?
- Our devices contain personal information, financial information, pictures, conversation history, and access to other's lives. Do we give our phones too much power?
- Can you describe what your feelings and emotions would be like if you lost your phone?
- What would worry you most about a stranger getting access to your phone?
- What would worry you most about a friend getting access to your phone?
- Are our cell phones, with their alerts and notifications, simply too irresistible to ignore?

The No App For Life One-Week Challenge

The students in the documentary *Celling Your Soul* experienced a totally tech-free week. If you are up for the "extreme" challenge of a full digital cleanse, go for it! If you're going on vacation, this may be the perfect opportunity. Research shows actual improvements in the brain circuitry after seven days without any technology. However, this "modified" version is for those who still have to work or go to school with digitally related responsibilities.

Objective
For one week, replace digital socialization with authentic human interaction, becoming more personal with your daily interactive opportunities. This is an exercise in mindful communication.

Find opportunities to experience hours throughout the day when you do not have your phone on you at all. Examples: When you go out to dinner with friends, leave your phone in the car. Use the time when you drive as an opportunity to "quiet" your world. When your phone is turned off, people automatically know you're not available. If there are people in the car with you, use the time for more intimate conversations, not allowing anyone to use their phone for outside socializing. Have a rule that "What is said in the car stays in the car" in order to deepen trust. BE PRESENT.

Chronicle your feelings in a handwritten, video, or audio journal. Your journal is NOT to be posted or shared with anyone.

Question

How does the method of your journaling communication affect your responses? Does handwriting in a journal feel more personal than a video? Are you more conscious of how you look if you're speaking to a camera? Is there still a sense that "someone" can get hold of the video… someday?
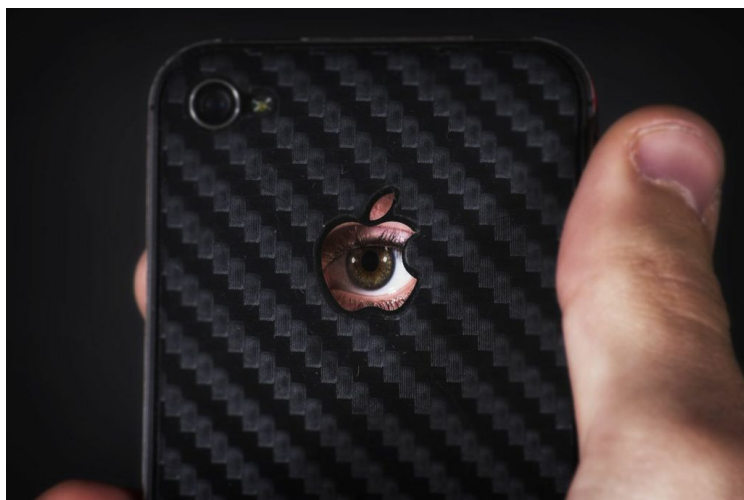
Digital Guidelines

Step 1
Remove all digital social apps and icons from smartphones and laptops. That includes all social media apps. No social media for one week. No posting, no looking. It's only one week out of your entire life! If you feel the need, send out one last announcement using #noappforlife, "See you in a week!" You may actually empower others with the message that it's OK to take a break from social media as part of a new healthy tech behavior and new social norm.

Step 2
Talk, don't text. Use your phone only for phone calls and as a tool for emergencies. During class hours, the phone must actually be turned off and put away or stored in a locker or left home. At the end of the day, you can retrieve messages, but you must return messages with phone calls — no text response. Or, go bold — have your texting deactivated for a week. If you feel too anxious to do either, use texting as a replacement for a stick-on note. But, do NOT have conversations through texting.

Step 3
No phones or computers in the bedroom at night. Get an actual alarm clock instead of using your phone to wake up.

Questions to Ponder
How do you feel actually turning your phone off? Is this a big deal for you? Why? How did you sleep?

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During this week, students are encouraged to practice a variety of personal communication skills while being mindful of how these authentic skills affect their personal development and relationships.

Questions to Ponder
If everyone is taking the challenge, does doing this together make it easier? If no one is on social media, do you feel less stressed? What might make you feel like checking social media?

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What interests you the most about participating?
What do you want to learn about yourself? How do
you think you will feel? What concerns you the most
about taking this challenge?

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Development of Soft Skills

The most interesting people are those who are interested. And as we know, we cannot get good at something unless we practice.

Small talk	Empathetic listening
Conversation starters	Paraphrasing
Listening	Intimacy building
Professional phone calls	Active listening
Face-to-face conversations	Talking to strangers

Journal

After watching the film *Celling Your Soul*, do you feel that you have an idea of how you will feel without your phone? This journal is all about you … understanding yourself and your communication skills, and recognizing what we need in regard to human "connectivity."

The following questions are just to get you thinking. Your journal is YOUR journal; these are just "thought starters."

Before starting your **No App For Life** challenge, check in with your thoughts and feelings. How am I feeling about communicating with everyone in a different way? Am I nervous?

Day One

How would I rate my anxiety today, on a scale of
1 to 10? (1 = very low; 10 = very high) Can I identify
exactly what is making me nervous? For example,
am I afraid of missing out? What do I think will hap-
pen to me if I miss out on something? Am I nervous
about speaking spontaneously rather than being
able to text?

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Day Two

How would I rate my anxiety today, on a scale of 1 to 10? (1 = very low; 10 = very high) How did I sleep last night? How does my first day align with the feelings of the students in the film? Am I more "panicky," as the student Mike reported? Do I have a sense of relief that my friends are doing this with me?

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Day Three

How would I rate my anxiety today, on a scale of 1 to 10? (1 = very low; 10 = very high) How am I feeling? What does the world look like when I don't have my phone front and center all the time? Have I been able to make eye contact with people walking in the halls? Can I strike up a conversation with someone I might have never talked to before?

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Day Four

How would I rate my anxiety today, on a scale of 1 to 10? (1 = very low; 10 = very high) How is this experiment working for me? What am I learning about people … what am I learning about myself?

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Day Five

How would I rate my anxiety today, on a scale of 1 to 10? (1 = very low; 10 = very high) What are my observations about the digital world? If I were a parent today, how would I raise my own kids in regard to digital devices? How are my parents reacting to my not being available to them 24/7? Is this bothering them more than me? Can I ask them how they're feeling in open-ended questions? What makes them nervous?

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Day Six

How would I rate my anxiety today, on a scale of 1 to 10? (1 = very low; 10 = very high) Am I anxiously counting the hours to resume my old ways, or is there a part of me that actually really likes this form of communication? Have I felt a sense of relief in some respects?

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Day Seven

How would I rate my anxiety today, on a scale of 1 to 10? (1 = very low; 10 = very high) What did I learn about myself? Maybe I learned that I'm happy and can live without the demands of 24/7 connectivity, or maybe I learned I actually couldn't. Either way, I learned about myself. That was the goal! On my last day, do I feel like going another week? Do I want to see how long I can go like this? What happens if everyone goes back to social media and constant texting and I would prefer to continue this way? Would I try to encourage friends to keep going with me?

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Congratulations for wanting to learn and grow! Awesome job!

The **No App For Life** team would love to hear from you! If you would like to share your experience, please email us at noappforlife@gmail.com. Adhering to the digital distinction theory, we use social media as *tools of mass communication* in a best-practices, mindful digital citizenship application.

Social media can be great tools for community building, announcements, and marketing, but are not the best choice as tools of personal communication, intimacy building, or "stream of consciousness" writing. For community building or sharing/broadcasting your experience, you can find us online at www.noappforlife.com and on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Of course, for a more personal connection, call to chat with us directly at 617 396-4321!

Parents and Teachers: Take the Challenge!

Teachers
This might be a good opportunity to use some of those wonderfully creative ideas you've always wanted to try!

Discussion Question
Why do the CEO of Google, and many of the parents at technologically innovative companies, send their own children to zero-tech schools? Why do the creators of "educational apps" implement the strongest limitations of use on their own children? The average time allowed by many of these technological parents is only 20 minutes, and only on weekends.

For class homework assignments, think about how students can demonstrate their knowledge by using their own *human* apps. Instead of a typed written essay, will you allow students to give a three-minute oral "news report" on the information?

In class, can you give groups of students a problem to solve together? Maybe as their homework, students can come up with a list of problems, and then during a class, each group can pick one problem from a hat. Each group of three students has to come up with three different solutions to the problem without the use of any technology — just creative thinking, active listening and brainstorming — with the class voting on the best solution.

Parents

Take the challenge. Support your kid's efforts. Use this time to connect. If you need your phone for business or work, model that you can turn yours off for an hour (or more) of focused attention with your child/family. Remember, behavior is the most accurate form of communication, and listening is love.

Say, for example, "I will pick you up at 5 p.m. in front of the school, and will leave you a voice message *only* if anything changes." Do you feel you would have to call your child if you're running 5, 10, or 15 minutes late, or will they trust you will be there soon? How does it feel to use the old-school model?

This may be an interesting opportunity for your kids to understand how people used to connect in a world without constant reminders, and for you to remember as well!

Discussion Question

What is the number one skill set needed for future success in the workforce? Believe it or not, it's *empathy.* Human skills are becoming the "new trend," as companies are realizing that the new work force is lacking social skills needed for success. Research shows that authentic connectivity in the work force leads to creativity and profit.

"An ability to supply something that humans most want from other humans has high value, and those wants won't be changing anytime soon."
Geoff Colvin, *Fortune* Magazine
Author, *Humans Are Underrated*

This generation, ironically, feels they are "not being heard and not understood." Regardless of the endless tools of connectivity, without an authentic response — active listening or connecting on an

emotional level — the digital "likes" feel superficial, inauthentic, and empty, and they often lead to depression.

People communicate and have conversations in order to "bond" more than to share information. There is an actual synchronicity in the brain when two people talk face-to-face.

Model Empathetic Responses
Ask your child about their day. (I know! Don't laugh — it takes a few days to get beyond "fine.") Try open-ended questions like these: Can you explain how your coach motivates you? Do you feel that's effective? How did Joe react to getting into ___ (the play, college, etc.)? What was the one thing that really made you laugh today? Is it something you can actually tell me about? What do parents really have no clue about that you think we should learn more about? How can parents help their kids today? I'm trying to understand how kids feel about...? Ask your kids for their opinions, and value them.

Non-Judgmental Listening
This is the hard part! Respond in order to connect emotionally and without giving any advice or talking about yourself. It's not easy, but the less we judge people while they're talking, the more we'll learn.

For example, use phrases like "Oh, so when you say___, you mean you feel___," or "Oh, that can't be easy___," or "I totally understand how you can feel when___," or "I'm so sorry…"

As adults, we've learned these little communication lessons over the years. In the digital age and as parents to a new generation of kids using alternative communications, we may feel that these lessons are antiquated. They're not. They've been proven strategies for years. Technology has changed; people haven't.

Our new world of communication is still unfolding, and we have yet to establish a solid protocol. We need to critically analyze our new apps and tools of communication and see whether our technology is serving us or we're serving it. It's important to hold on to our human values for personal development, strong relationships, and healthy boundaries. At **No App For Life,** we will continue to question and challenge the shaping effects of our media and technology on us as individuals and as a society.

We'd love your input and feedback, as we are always about learning. Please connect with us at www.noappforlife.com and join our mission! We're not anti-technology; we're pro-human.

Emergency Phone Numbers

List phone numbers here that you may need to use during the week. Remember, these are for emergencies only!

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Additional materials can be ordered through:

Bullfrog Films
www.bullfrogfilms.com
Celling Your Soul film page at
www.bullfrogfilms.com/catalog/ceso.html
or call 610 779-8226
info@bullfrogfilms.com

Book Community Screenings at
www.bullfrogcommunities.com/celling_your_soul
Join the discussion and share your No-App-for-Life
Challenge experience. Additional resources.

For workshop information, contact
No App For Life, LLC
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